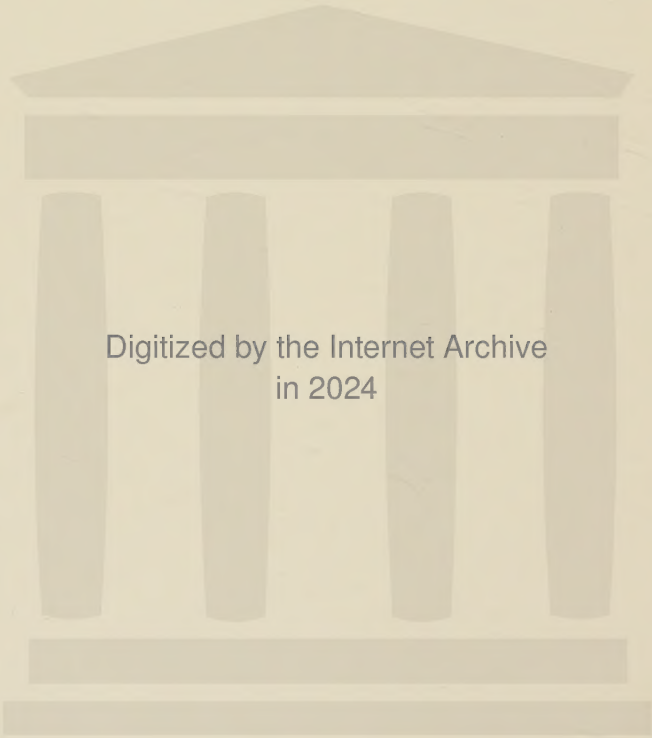
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/mymemoirsvolumes0012alfr

MY MEMOIRS

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND LIBRARY

MY MEMOIRS

BY

GRAND ADMIRAL
VON TIRPITZ

VOLUME I

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1919

COPYRIGHT, 1919
By DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY, INC.

The Quinn & Boden Company
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
RAHWAY NEW JERSEY

PREFACE

THE despair that seized upon all patriotically minded Germans when the Empire which we had thought invincible collapsed has also wrecked many people's faith in our nation and in the continuity of its historical development. It seemed to me my duty therefore to write down my reminiscences, because I can show proofs that the old structure of our state was not antiquated and rotten, but was capable of any development, and moreover that the political legend of a ruthless autocracy and a bellicose military caste having let loose this war is an insult to truth. The Kaiser in particular did not want the war, but did his utmost to prevent it when he realized the danger.

If history is just and cannot be perverted by the fabrication of legends, it should show that by far the greater measure of the responsibility for this war rests with our enemies. The rule of the road at sea puts the blame in collisions on the person who causes the danger of the situation, and not on the one who makes a mistake through incorrect judgment at the last moment in his endeavour to escape from it. Our misfortune, however, did not proceed from the acquisition of power, but from the weakness which did not know how to use that power either for the purpose of preserving or concluding peace, and in addition,

from our illusions about our enemies, the nature of their war aims, their conduct of the war, and the nature of the economic war.

In order to make myself understood, I must speak the truth to the best of my knowledge. I am compelled, therefore, to present the actions of persons who are alive according to my own views, which will probably differ from theirs, and consequently give rise to some pain. Nothing is farther from my mind than to impute to them ignoble ends, or any blame in the general sense of the word.

It is only Germany's desperate position which forces me against my own inclination to publish these facts during my lifetime.

Now that the writing of my reminiscences is finished, I feel that I must heartily thank all those who have helped me in my task. Besides my friends and my comrades, both young and old, who have examined the correctness of my statements in the light of their own information, these thanks are due especially to the Professor of History in the University of Frankfort, Dr. Fritz Kern, who has stood at my side from the very beginning in the most sympathetic and untiring way. Lastly, I should like to thank the publisher, Dr. Koehler, for the friendly interest that he has shown in the book.

A. von Tirpitz.

Jagdhaus Zabelsberg,
April, 1919.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

IN THE PRUSSIAN NAVY

PAGE

1. Entering the Service. Prussian navy and Prussian politics, 1866-1870. Warfare then and now.—2. Foreign political currents. Relations with England—More at home in Plymouth than in Kiel. The superiority of the English. "But you are not a sea-going nation" . . 1

CHAPTER II

THE STOSCH ERA

1. In Hamburg, 1871. German fishermen under foreign flag. Foreign service. Carthagena.—2. "Those are soldiers." The militarization of the navy. The Naval Academy. The Naval Staff. Stosch's plan for the foundation of a navy.—3. We explore. Manysidedness of maritime interests 17

CHAPTER III

THE CAPRIVI ERA

1. Caprivi's fundamental idea. Preparations for the approaching war on two fronts. Coastal defence. The twelve tactical questions. The Naval Staff. Our first plan of operations. The lack of a shipbuilding programme.—2. Caprivi, Imperial Chancellor 36

CHAPTER IV

TECHNICAL MATTERS

1. The torpedo-boat arm. In Fiume. The elaboration of my method. State and private war-industry. The navy's system of supply.—2. Work *honoris causa*. The development of the torpedo-boat. Every warship a compromise.—3. Personalities 46

CHAPTER V

THE NEW COURSE

PAGE

1. Caprivi leaves the Admiralty. The fatal division of naval authority. The chaos. Memoranda. An "imposition". 58

CHAPTER VI

TACTICAL WORK

1. Commissioned to develop the tactics of the High Sea Fleet. My preparatory school for this in the study of torpedo-boat tactics. The "black company."—2. Training the High Sea Fleet. Line tactics. The squadron principle. The English in arrears 63

CHAPTER VII

NAVY SCHEMES

1. Service publications. Sea-fight or cruiser warfare?—2. The necessity of a fleet for Germany. Correspondence with Stosch. Attitude towards England.—3. My 1895 plan of operations. Acquisition of Heligoland . . 75

CHAPTER VIII

TSINGTAO

1. Need for a German base in China. An impossible choice. With the Russians. Tsingtao, not Amoy.—2. Form and extent of the lease. Tsingtao is kept under the Imperial Admiralty. The "Empire" of the navy. Economic development and pioneer work in civilization. —3. Germans abroad and the navy. Securing German sentiment abroad.—4. Naval maps. The high school in Tsingtao.—5. The loss of Tsingtao 91

CHAPTER IX

AT THE ADMIRALTY

1. Once more: foreign service fleet or battle fleet? The reason why we needed a battle fleet.—2. Preparation of the first Navy Bill. My method.—3. The reasons for the form of the Bill 118

CHAPTER X

WITH BISMARCK

PAGE

1. The launching of the *Fürst Bismarck*. My first visit to Friedrichsruh. A fatal beginning. Bismarck on the balance of power at sea.—2. Drive through the Sachsenwald.—3. The last visit to Friedrichsruh 131

CHAPTER XI

THE NAVY BILLS

1. Instruction of the people in naval affairs.—2. The first Navy Bill before the Reichstag.—3. The necessity for a second Navy Bill.—4. Unintentionally speedy progress. The fundamental ideas of naval construction.—5. The second Navy Bill before the Reichstag . . . 142

CHAPTER XII

BUILDING THE FLEET

1. Technical difficulties. The nature of our shipbuilding. Safeguards against sinking. The superiority of our shipbuilding over foreign navies.—2. Economy and money shortage. My deficient programme. Submarines and airships.—3. Friction with the other naval authorities.—4. Attitude to Parliament. About *personnel*. Are we on the right lines?—5. My last plans 166

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER THE KAISER

1. Suggestions. A constructive amateur.—2. Cabinet mischief. Marginal notes. Lack of character . . . 201

CHAPTER XIV

ADMIRALTY AND FOREIGN POLICY

1. Imperial constitution and business procedure. My political principles.—2. Relations with Russia and with Japan.—3. The Balance of Power at sea. The small states.—4. Relations with America.—5. Our mistaken actions 213

CHAPTER XV

ENGLAND AND THE GERMAN FLEET

PAGE

1. English economic jealousy and the "danger zone" in naval shipbuilding.—2. Beginning of the English naval scare. Our supplementary Navy Estimates in 1906 and 1908. Admiral Fisher's naval scare. Considerations of a naval agreement with England.—3. Agadir. The necessity for a Navy Bill in 1911. A controversy regarding the estimates.—4. Haldane's mission.—5. Criticisms of "my naval policy."—6. Marschall in London. Relief 254

CHAPTER XVI

THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

1. Retrospect.—2. German policy in July, 1914.—3. The "house of cards."—4. Preventive war?—5. The guilt question.—6. The last days.—7. The navy's share . . 309

MY MEMOIRS

MY MEMOIRS

CHAPTER I

IN THE PRUSSIAN NAVY

1. Entering the Service. Prussian Navy and Prussian politics, 1866-1870. Warfare then and now.—2. Foreign political currents. Relations with England. More at home in Plymouth than in Kiel. The superiority of the English. "But you are not a sea-going nation."

I

When I was a boy there was scarcely any trace left of the enthusiasm for the navy which the Revolution of '48 aroused in Germany, although it flickered up once more in the year 1864 after the Battle of Jasmund. My going into the navy was not the result of a passionate fondness for it, but was the unintentional product of my father's educational ideal, which was ahead of his time. As my father felt in himself the lack of a knowledge of the exact sciences, he sent my brother and me to the *Realschule* of our native town Frankfort-on-the-Oder, instead of to the *Gymnasium,* intending to let us change schools when we reached the top form. But in view of the slight undeveloped state of the *realschule* at that time, this school proved

inadequate; I have felt the effects of this all my life. Our teachers were so old-fashioned that they spoke a language which we really did not understand. As a scholar I was very mediocre, and at Christmas, 1864, my certificate was "Moderate." My school friend Maltzahn had expressed his intention of entering the navy, and so it occurred to me that it might mean a certain relief for my parents if I too were to take up the idea. At first my proposal was received in complete silence at home, but after some weeks my father called me to him and told me that my depressed state of mind had been noticed. My mind seemed to be set on the navy, he said, and if I wanted to go, no obstacle would be placed in my way. Nobody could have been more suprised than I; but what was I to do? I kept to my word, and in the spring of 1865 I presented myself at the age of sixteen for the entrance examination at the Naval Cadets' Institute of those days in Berlin, passed, to everybody's surprise, fifth on the list, and became a sailor.

The attractions of the navy were, as I have said, slight at that time. In 1861 the corvette *Amazone* had gone down with almost all the cadets on board who constituted the supply of officers for many years to come. This event reduced the applications for naval cadetships to three the following year, and compelled the conditional acceptance even in my year of several candidates who had failed, in addition to the ten aspirants who were successful. The grasp of naval affairs possessed by the Prussian *intelligentsia* of those

days, as well as the hereditary German tendency to regard everything from the standpoint of domestic party politics, is indicated by an article which appeared at the time in the *Gartenlaube*. It described in novelistic form how the Prussian Junker party attempted to destroy the liberal institution of the navy by bribing a Danish captain to ram the *Amazone*. The author of this malicious piece of foolery seemed to overlook the fact that the majority of the cadets who were drowned were themselves "Junkers"; Prince Adalbert was very careful in his choice of prospective officers.

Moreover, I occasionally found in my earlier presentations of the Navy Estimates to Parliament that certain Conservative circles distrusted the idea of a fleet. It was not considered to be in keeping with the Prussian tradition, it competed in some degree with the army, it seemed too closely related with industry and commerce in view of the agricultural distress of that time and the great economic conflicts of the parties. Individual members of the extreme Right even voted against the Second Navy Bill of 1900, against the "horrible Fleet," as a Conservative leader called it,—whilst overwhelmingly sympathetic support was to be found from the outset among the Liberal *bourgeoisie*, side by side with some of the bitterest opposition to the Bill.

The immediate result of the sinking of the *Amazone* was to increase still further the confusion of personalities in our Naval Officers Corps in 1864. Portions

of this corps had been previously transferred from the army, whence cavalrymen in particular brought with them the youthful independence necessary for naval service; others came from the German or Danish navies: others again had been trained in England, America, or Holland. In addition the so-called Dantzig *stuerkes* were enlisted from the merchant sailing ships in order to fill the gaps which the war with Denmark had revealed in the Officers' Corps. Indeed Dantzig was still our real port. These seamen usually only sailed on the short voyage between Dantzig and England, whilst the better sorts went up into the North Sea. The influx of these uneducated sea-dogs from the merchant service of those days brought many a joke into our mess; we called them *Hilfsbarone,* and they included some remarkable characters who were removed after 1870, several of them after proceedings had been taken by a court of honour. Their authority was often not recognized by the crews, whilst the officer from the Cadet Institute always remained the master, although he was in a certain sense more of a comrade to the ordinary sailor. Washington's principle of only taking gentlemen for his officers proved its wisdom to us also. It is only bravery in face of the enemy that can make up for lack of education. In general, the naval cadets of those days were short of teachers who could be considered educators. According to the good Prussian tradition, there was no lack of drudgery: we were dragged from one course to another until we obtained officers' rank

after four and a half years. But the teachers had little idea of handling this human material. Many of the old Prussian naval officers therefore went their own way or became cranks; at the best they were self-taught. My year, however, was favoured: we had excellent superiors, to whom I look back with gratitude. Admiral Batsch was our commander at that time. It is said with some justice that it depends upon the way cadets are handled in the first year whether the crew turns out well or not.

Duty centred in the main in learning how to handle rigging. The art of navigation as evolved through the centuries required long training for officers and ratings. As was usual in the days of sailing ships, we had adventures on many occasions during our training voyages, which made us understand the days of Marryat and Nelson as though we had seen them ourselves.

It was seldom that the paths of the Prussian Navy crossed those of Prussian politics. When it did happen, it was generally in the way related to us by those who took part in the voyage of the *Gazelle* to Japan in 1864. A German ship had gone ashore in the neighbourhood of Yokohama, and had been looted. The commander of the *Gazelle,* Captain von Bothmer, went thither with a landing party to protect it. On the way he met a *daimio* who demanded kowtow. Our commander refused. The *daimio* was surrounded by 3,000 Japanese knights in steel armour, with lowered heads, and arms crossed over their swords. Fi-

nally the captain got out of the difficulty by offering the salute which is given to a royal prince in Prussia. An agreement was made on the formula: a march past at the double with rifles at the slope.

The ships were also used for reprisals against exotic states. As a rule, however, in those days we went on instructional voyages with no other end in view than that of training the Fleet.

There was an atmosphere of the Middle Ages about our actions in war-time too. The *Niobe* had to reckon with meeting the Austrian steam corvette *Erzherzog Friedrich* in the Channel in 1866, and, being a sailing-ship, had to avoid a fight. I was then No. 3 at the muzzle-loading gun, and it was my duty to put in the cannon balls; by my side lay my pike, ready to hand in case the enemy should grapple and press through the port-hole. Other people stood ready with pole-axes which they were to strike into the hull of the enemy vessel, and use as steps. Off the Scilly Islands we sighted a ship lying-to, resembling the Austrian in build. It got under way and was evidently bearing down upon us; it then hoisted up its funnel and pursued us under steam. Fog separated us during the night. When it lifted near Plymouth, and we stood by, cleared for action, the frigate hoisted the Norwegian flag, and we youngsters were disappointed in our joyful anticipation of a fight. Later we lay at Kiel with loaded guns off the streets of the old town, which lead down to the water-side, when the Prussians under Manteuffel were advancing across the canal at

Holtenau, and it seemed questionable whether the Austrians under Gablentz would put up a resistance or not. Gablentz, however, entrained and went off, our band playing meanwhile. The Austrian officers had been very much liked in Kiel; their many promises were now broken, but they had won all hearts, whilst the Prussians, who looked as though they had swallowed their ram-rods, came to disturb the desired formation of an independent little state of Slesvig-Holstein. In spite of the existing state of war we rejoiced at Tegetthoff's sea victory at Lissa almost as though he were one of ourselves. In 1864, the Austrian fleet had fought very valiantly at our side in the heavy engagement near Heligoland, and Austria was still looked upon by us as a German brother-country; in those days Austria's Czechs and Poles were completely overlooked.

Our reputation abroad increased considerably in 1866. Once before we had felt humiliated at the way we had been looked down upon in Cadiz when the Spanish officer kept us waiting for the quay-side inspection. But in Marseilles in 1867 the people came rushing on board to see the Prussians. In Nice needle-guns were exhibited in the fair-booths. To be sure the French officers gave us a foretaste of 1870 partly by their arrogance and partly by ill-concealed vexation.

In the spring of 1870 our first armoured squadron was formed of four different ships, and I was a sub-lieutenant on board the flagship *König Wilhelm*.

Prince Adalbert, who had begged to be allowed to command the squadron, was no longer in the zenith of his power, but after some hesitation the King granted his request—to celebrate his resignation, so to speak —and we went to the Azores. Instruction on these armoured ships was still influenced by the customs of the sailing-ships: we even tried to sail on this voyage, but the hulks refused to move. The position of the Prussian Navy at that time is characterized by the fact that we had no dockyards for big ships in German harbours. When the ships were commissioned sufficient weight was not given to the fact that an iron ship must be docked every year to be cleaned. When the war with France began to smoulder, our squadron had not been docked for several years; we calculated later that the *König Wilhelm* had over sixty tons of mussels on its sides which had reduced its speed from fourteen to ten knots. An engine defect compelled us to run into Plymouth for a lengthy period of repair and the English admiral offered us his dock. It is still not clear to me why we did not accept it; it was stated in the officers' mess at the time that the Prince was the difficulty, because he could not stay all the time in the dockyard. However that may be, we steamed back through the Channel in the middle of July, without having been into dock, and in daily expectation of being attacked by the French, against whom our only defence would have been practice shot (filled with peas) and a fuse which misfired at every opportunity.

On July 16th we arrived in Wilhelmshaven, where the mobilization was in full swing, but we could not enter the harbour because the locks were not yet completed; so we remained in the roads. The dangers of being without a dockyard crippled the squadron; any damage to the ship's bottom was irreparable and meant incapacity for battle. We now went through a hard time in the outer roads. We were to be thrown into the fight if Hamburg or any other place on the North Sea was attacked. We also put out to sea twice; once as far as the Dogger Bank to watch the two new French armoured vessels which had been sent to reinforce the French Eastern Squadron; and the second time when we expected to find the French fleet scattered after a storm, to the leeward of Heligoland. On neither occasion did we come to blows. The army reproached us for not attacking the whole French fleet when it suddenly appeared off Wilhelmshaven on its way home. We youngsters were also indignant at not being let loose on the enemy, but this caution was correct. We were three armoured ships to their eight, and we could only do 10 knots; and even if Captain Werner had advertised the *König Wilhelm* in the *Gartenlaube* as the strongest ship in the world, this was not sufficient to counterbalance a threefold superiority. In view of the lack of any possibility of refitment we should have had to expect the loss of our whole fleet, without reaping any advantage thereby. It was also difficult for the lay mind to understand why we did not at least attempt a raid. An engage-

ment begun at sea, however, cannot be broken off if the enemy has the greater speed. In any case the navy was blamed for its inactivity, and we were not even allowed to count these years as war service.

In 1870 we had some excellent Lloyd steamers which we could have armed for privateering warfare. We kept, however, to the declaration which we had made at the beginning of the war, that we would not privateer. When the French seized our merchantmen, we ultimately changed our standpoint, but it was then too late for the necessary preparations.

The maritime law of these days, based on the Paris Convention of 1856, prevented the French from bombarding open towns; though if they had done so we could have taken reprisals. Any disarming of our warships lying in foreign waters was also against the law. Our ships coaled in Vigo whilst the French ships lay outside the harbour, and a French sloop was actually within the harbour watching us. In the open roads of Fayal in the Azores the French armoured vessel *Montcalm* circled round our sloop *Arcona* which was lying at anchor there, without doing it any harm. In short, it was a naval war without the English. In the later world-war the lawyers of the Foreign Office and the Reichstag still placed the greatest hopes in the niceties of maritime law, whilst the English passed them over with sovereign power, and will strive after the war for a new maritime law which will stabilize their police control of the seas.

The campaign which had been so glorious for the

army lay heavy on the navy. In addition, our inactive war service in the outer roads had been a heavy strain. We were prepared for an attack at any time under unfavourable conditions. Our mine barrier troubled us more than the enemy; the bad mines broke loose in a heavy sea and drifted about in the roads. For months I went on the watch for four hours every night on the projecting ram of the *König Wilhelm,* to look out for our own mines, although this would have been just as useless for catching loose mines in the misty autumn weather as the floating wooden barricade attached to the bowsprit of the ship.

The greatest achievement of our squadron, however, was its entry into the locks of Wilhelmshaven when the winter compelled us to leave the outer roads. The harbour was unfinished; sheep were still grazing on the bottom of the basins on July 16th. The fairway into the harbour had not yet been dredged sufficiently; therefore in order to enter we had to abandon munitions and coal to lighten the vessel. During a lull in the weather on December 22nd, a heavy ice-drift set in and the floes rose as high as the batteries and cut the anchor chains. It was impossible for coal-barges to come into the roads. The entry had to be attempted, for apart from the fact that the exit from the roads at Wangeroog was dangerous, we had no more fuel on board to take us to Norway.

The entry was effected with great difficulty: on December 23rd everything that we possessed lay in

the harbour basin, and therewith the war ended as far as we were concerned.

But it was not in keeping with the Prussian character to allow us to enjoy our irresponsible existence in idleness. Partly in order to maintain discipline, and partly because it was thought that the navy ought to be tackled in a more military manner and brought up to a more soldierly standard, a tremendous amount of infantry drill was carried out in the winter months. The Stosch era was casting its shadow before.

II

My feelings towards England were determined by my family and my profession. The *milieu* in which I grew up was steeped in memories of the Wars of Liberation; my great-uncle had been orderly officer to York von Wartenburg; and even in my childhood's days patriotic sentiment pointed out anybody whose behaviour in '13 had not been above suspicion. There was still a strong preference for our old ally, England. That had not been permanently dimmed even by Palmerston's much-resented rejection of Germany's naval aspirations, nor by the reconnoitring services which the British performed round Heligoland for the Danes, against Tegetthoff in 1864. At all events my father, who inclined to liberal views in home politics, shared the resentment which was growing up in the Gneisenau circle against selfish Great Britain, and cherished his own youthful memories of the other allies of Prussia's regeneration, the Russians. The

difference of opinion among the great ones at home naturally reacted upon us children, and I can remember acting in a little play at a party at home in which my sister played the Englishman, my brother (who inherited the disposition of our two refugee grandmothers) played the Frenchman, and I as the Russian received the blows which represented the Crimean War.

As a sea-cadet I soon found from my own experience that the Prussians were still esteemed in England. Between 1864 and 1870 our real supply base was Plymouth, where Nelson's three-deckers and the great wooden ships of the line of the Crimean War lay in long rows up the river. Here we felt ourselves almost more at home than in the peaceful and idyllic Kiel, which only grumbled at Prussia and whose harbour was crossed at that time by one little steamer only, which brought flour from the water-mill at Swentin.

In the Navy Hotel at Plymouth we were treated like British midshipmen, even in regard to prices. As we poor brothers in arms of Waterloo had not yet offended England by our economic power we were suffered with friendly condescension. Our tiny naval officers' corps looked up to the British navy with admiration, and our seamen sailed in those days quite as much on English ships as on German. The majority of our ratings served for twelve years on the English model and only a small section were recruits, but these latter had sailed in every merchant service,

part of them indeed in the American navy, and all spoke English. We officers were on the best of terms with the English, and kept up this comradeship right into the last few years before the world-war, when the younger British officers began to pay less attention to manners (the result of the lowering of the social standard among the recruits), and to alter their behaviour towards us in consequence of the agitation against us.

The seeds of Britain's displeasure were sown on September 2nd, 1870. When our squadron anchored off Dover in July, 1870, in view of the threat of war, we were welcomed by innumerable steamers, closely packed with people, who shouted in a friendly way: "It is all settled between France and Prussia," because they believed that peace was assured after the Hohenzollern's candidature for the throne had been withdrawn.

The general attitude then was still: Poor Prussia! if only it is not swallowed up by Napoleon! We were looked upon as the attacked party. It was after the battle of Sedan that English feeling changed round, though it did not affect the navy, which still continued to treat us as professional brethren. It struck me, however, that the upper classes of English society abandoned our side immediately the war was over, a change which was helped by the much closer tie between their civilization and Paris, and by their coolness towards what was felt to be German lack of form.

The Prussian navy had little tradition of its own.

The expedition to Eastern Asia still stood out as a kind of famous deed, and then there was the war against Denmark (in which, however, the lack of a proper fleet was keenly felt when the support desired by Prince Friedrich Karl for the transportation of troops to Alsen broke down owing to the bad weather, the weak engines of our gunboats, and the superiority of the Danish fleet). We grew up on the British navy like a creeping plant. We preferred to get our supplies from England. If an engine ran smoothly and without a hitch, if a rope or a chain did not break, then it was certain not to be a home-made article, but a product of English workshops—a rope with the famous red strand of the British navy. In those ships which we had built ourselves things broke with uncomfortable readiness. When I came to Berlin in the winter of 1869 for the Artillery Test Commission, the great national question of Krupp *v.* Armstrong, which had just been decided in Krupp's favour, was still throbbing in people's minds. The navy had been for Armstrong. In those days we could not imagine that German guns could be equal to English.

When an Englishwoman saw our crews on board the *Friedrich Karl* at Gibraltar in 1873, she said in astonishment, "Don't they look just like sailors?" For our men were superior to the British at that time, just as I believe they were at the beginning of the world-war. When I asked her how else they should look, she replied in a most decided tone, "But you are not a sea-going nation."

On the whole Bismarck's words to Geelach in a letter of 1857 hold good for the relationship between us. . . . "As for foreign countries I have had all through my life a sympathy for England and its inhabitants, and it comes over me even now from time to time. But these people do not want to let themselves be liked by us."

CHAPTER II

THE STOSCH ERA

1. In Hamburg, 1871. German fishermen under foreign flag. Foreign service. Carthagena.—2. "Those are soldiers." The militarization of the Navy. The Naval Academy. The Naval Staff. Stosch's plan for the foundation of a navy.—3. We explore. Manysidedness of maritime interests.

I

From 1871 to 1888 the navy worked under landsmen. Lieut.-General von Stosch relieved Prince Adalbert of the supreme command in 1871, and at the same time took over the Naval Department of the War Ministry. General von Caprivi succeeded him as Chief of the Admiralty from 1883 up to the beginning of the William II era.

When the fine flag with the eagle was hauled down on our ships in 1867, and the flag of the North German Federation, more on the English pattern, was hoisted in its place, we ensigns were pained, it is true, at the disappearance of the Prussian colours, but we foreboded a great historical change, and emptied our glasses with mixed feelings. The year 1871 pushed the memory of Prussia farther back; we became Imperial officers and the navy received the black-white-and-red cockade.

We of the navy were in touch with the Hanseats at a time when they were anti-Prussian and refused military service. In 1871 I was a lieutenant on the *Blitz* in the Elbe, where Prussia had put a guardship in 1866 to watch the annexationist tendencies of Hamburg. This outpost was left on the frontier, forgotten; we had light river-duties and harbour-police duties; in general, however, we were purely demonstrative—and enjoyed Hamburg's friendship until Stosch found out that we were idling there, and cancelled the command. The harbour of Hamburg, full of poetry —the maze of sailing ships lay along the quay-side, for the docks had not yet been built—still had all the character of an import harbour. The shipping was chiefly in English hands, and one could perceive how much Germany's chief port had formerly been an English agency. It was not until the year 1895 that the German flag predominated for the first time over the English in the Hamburg harbour. When the *Blitz* lay in the Elbe, the Hamburgers, feeling themselves to be merely a passive commercial centre, still inclined towards England, upon whom indeed they were absolutely dependent, whilst Germany had to take their coffee and tobacco at any cost, so that even long afterwards the Hamburgers struggled against their incorporation in the Customs Union (1888).

Stosch started from the idea of developing Germany's maritime interests, of strengthening and protecting "Germandom" and German labour in the world. This policy was first brought home to me

when I was first officer of the gunboat *Blitz,* by an order to protect the fisheries.

Along with greater things the German herring fisheries had gone to ruin during the centuries of our weakness and our poverty. Stosch was the first man to support the first herring fishing association which was re-formed in Emden. The enterprise laboured under a disadvantage, because we had a longer way to go to the herring grounds than the foreign fishermen, and the tax of one thaler upon every ton of herrings—dating from Frederick the Great's administration in Eastern Friesland—did not allow so young a business to thrive with unskilled labour.

Before the world-war, we unfortunately imported foreign fish, mostly herrings, to the value of far more that Mk. 100,000,000. A higher tariff which was aimed at was wrecked by the catchword "the poor man's herring," although the tax would have been scarcely noticeable on each herring at the retail dealers. For it is the middleman between Emden and Berlin who doubles the price of herrings.

The five Emden trawlers who first ventured out herring fishing asked for military protection, because neither their lives nor their nets were safe among the Scottish and Dutch fishermen who fished in hundreds on their customary grounds. Our old wooden gunboat had at the same time to study the best way of making catches and the best stations for the herring shoals. Owing to the breaking of a mast we arrived late at the grounds—it was June, and as light as day

at midnight at more than 60° longitude; the sea was calm and covered with fishing boats, Dutchmen, Scots, and a few French—but when we looked round for our boats we could not find our charges for days. At last we saw a few trawlers which agreed with our description, and we actually recognised through the telescope the thin black-white-and-red strip which had been given us as a mark of recognition. When we approached them, however, the nearest trawler set sail and made off. We sent a shot after it, whereupon it lowered its sail. When we asked the men why they denied their German nationality, they said that it would have been too unsafe for them, that they would have run the risk of the strangers sailing through their nets and tearing them in two. Our good Emdeners as a matter of fact sailed under the Dutch flag, and were afraid of acknowledging the German colours. In Lerwick we did meet one who hoisted the German flag at our approach, dutifully brought us a ton of herrings, but then immediately put to sea and vanished. The officer of a Dutch warship lying there then told us that this trawler which had acted like a German that day had come in only the night before disguised as a Dutchman, and had gone to the Dutch vessel for a doctor and medicine. The Herring Association had itself recommended this peculiar proceeding to its members.

Thus we saw in the most illuminating way how intimidated a great nation can become without sea-power and how cut off we were from the riches which the

sea offered us. It was not very long since Palmerston had threatened to treat any ship flying the German flag as a pirate. When we were at Amrum in the same year (1872), several trawlers from Finkenwerder hid themselves behind the island because the English North Sea fishing fleet with eighty or ninety boats was covering the sea in front of Amrum. We advised the people of Finkenwerder to put out because we should have liked nothing better than to be able to seize one of those foreign fishermen for any transgression of the three-mile limit. The men replied, however, that they would not dare to do this because we were not always there to protect them. This was the state of our national pride and prestige along our own coasts. How we had fallen since the days of the Hanseatic League!

Stosch's increasing endeavour to further Germany's maritime interests in all directions was pursued under great difficulties from the beginning of his period of office. Foreign service at this time almost overstrained the resources of the navy. Every commander, however, could reckon upon Stosch's consistent support in his activities abroad, even in the often independent and difficult decisions which foreign service required as a result of the scarcity of cable connections. But this was not done without some friction with the Imperial Chancellor. In 1873, when I was officer of the watch on the *Friedrich Karl,* we received orders to protect Germans in the ports of Southern Spain where there was civil war. While doing so we seized

a sloop that had been captured by the insurgents and was flying a red flag; but this did not meet with Bismarck's approval. Then again our commander, Werner, in conjunction with the British armoured vessel *Swiftsure,* was asked by the Germans and also by the Spanish municipal authorities of Malaga to seize the insurgent ships *Almansa* and *Victoria;* he did so, and put their *personnel,* together with their leader, General Contreras, on shore at Carthagena. But an order came from Berlin for the dismissal of Werner, and for the recall of our squadron from the roads of Carthagena. We heard afterwards that in Berlin, both Stosch and Moltke had supported Werner, whilst Bismarck insisted upon his dismissal and actually wanted to bring him before a court martial.

In Carthagena we had been co-operating with British ships, which to our shame we had now to leave in the lurch. At Gibraltar, Werner was relieved of his command. When he left the ship he read us a few letters from Stosch, and ended with the words, "That's what the man writes to me." He rebelled, so to speak. Hitherto we had been held in high esteem; it had been enough for our flag to show itself; when it was said "Frederico Carlos està qui," the whole coast, filled as it was with insurgents, became quiet. But our position declined so much with the sacrifice of Werner, that we afterwards experienced great difficulties, and not only with the insurgents. Whilst many Germans had previously remembered their nationality, and whilst their numbers on the

consular lists was constantly increasing (in Malaga it had actually been trebled in a week), the Germans were henceforward badly treated everywhere, and ultimately their houses were looted in Carthagena. Hereupon we receivd orders to proceed against the fortress of Carthagena. Now this was difficult from a military point of view with the *Friedrich Karl* and one gunboat. Our new commander telegraphed to Stosch that it was doubtful whether he could carry out the order with the forces at his disposal. Stosch's reply was phrased with the classic pungency which was characteristic of him. He said that other ships would be commissioned for our support, but that for the rest he would suggest that it was not ships but men that did the fighting. We proceeded, therefore, and the order was promptly executed. But our reputation along the coast had sunk for once; this was not without its consequences, nor without its economic disadvantages also.

The English are not accustomed to abandon an officer, either politically or militarily, no matter whether his action exceeds the prescribed limits or not. Whether it is the annihilation of the Turkish fleet at Navarino or the struggle for the Taku forts, whether it is the flight of the daughter of the Sultan of Zanzibar, whether it is a planned murder like that of Sir Roger Casement, the "King Stephen" incident, or even the "Baralong" affair, which they have probably condemned in private, the English protect their people on principle, in order to strengthen the

regard for Britons in the world, and their inclination to act on their own initiative. In the English foreign service attention is paid to liberty of action, and as a precaution risky enterprises are carried out as far as possible by subordinatees and not by chiefs of missions. With us the hierarchical order is inviolably preserved.

In this case Bismarck's motives were not known to us younger sailors, and the exposure of Werner was incomprehensible in so far as in our view it could only be welcomed by the legitimate Spanish Government, if the protection of the quite considerable German interests on the south coast at the time weakened the insurgents. Our reverence for Bismarck did not suffer from the incident any more than from his other disagreements with Stosch. His peculiar greatness carried with it perhaps the disadvantage that our knowledge of politics, like that of the majority of Germans, was not very highly developed, since everything connected with politics seemed to be provided for, so to speak, for all time by the figure of the old master who had given us the Empire.

II

In addition we had no time for politics. Apart from the development of Germany's maritime interests, Stosch's second fundamental idea by which he left his mark on the navy was that he taught it to *work*. I do not mean work without mistakes; that was impossible with a nation that was estranged from the sea

and its nature; but work in its real sense. The more mature the navy became, and the more our nation came to understand the great prospects in the sea, the more fruit did this capacity for work bear. I remembered the astonished remarks of English officers when we lay in our old tubs alongside the modern English vessels at Malta in 1890, and drilled and drudged the whole day long. If they demanded so much of their people, they said, there would be mutiny. They could not understand this stringent regimen, particularly as, in consequence of the short period of service of the German crew, it did not altogether lead to efficiency. The year before, we had paraded a landing division before the Queen in the park at Osborne; the British naval officers exclaimed in astonishment, "These are soldiers." The impression was not quite correct, but it was significant.

Under Prince Adalbert strict care had been taken that the customs copied from the English navy should be naval and not military. For example, when the Prince made a tour of inspection the sailor had to wear his gigantic shining hat on the back of his head and stand with his legs apart; people stepping on to the quarter-deck had to salute the flag; on board, the seaman saluted his officer by taking off his cap, the petty officer by lifting his cap, and so on with many other bits of etiquette; but there was no standing stiffly to attention, nor could one keep one's hands to one's trouser seams in the old sailing days. The crews had strenuous and dangerous but individual duties,

and the petty officers often acted on their own initiative up aloft. When the ship rolled, everybody had to look to himself. The army training did not exist in the service in the days of training ships.

When we lay in the Wilhelmshaven basin in the winter of 1870, and the rigging was all down, we were, as I said, drilled to exhaustion. The military tendency increased too abruptly under General Stosch. Many of the older officers grumbled: there used to be one spot left in Prussia where one could live, they said, and that was the navy; this state of things could not be borne any longer. There were others, however, who carried the infantry training and the drill farther than Stosch had probably intended, in order to further their own reputations. The slight attraction of the navy under Stosch also led him to accept less suitable officer recruits. This fact, and the impossibility of getting any tactical schooling for the navy of those days, are together responsible for the scarcity of personality among the admirals of the beginning of the twentieth century. Stosch's personality was as sharp as jagged iron. He frequently amused us during inspection by strong reprimands which often cut to the root of the matter. I can remember one criticism at the end of an inspection, which began with the cutting words: "Sheer slop—from the commander to the lowest ship's boy!" It is true that the commander had had the honour and the misfortune to entertain Prince Friedrich Karl on board for four weeks during the summer: a kind of visit which Stosch re-

garded as distracting to the service. His forceful intervention in the whole development of the navy was helped by the fact that he practically united in himself both the supreme executive command and the administration, so that internal obstacles could be easily brushed aside by him.

In the twelve-year ratings—long-service men—the old Prussian navy possessed a *personnel* which we have never since obtained. Stosch introduced the three years', or more correctly the two and a half years' service, more ruthlessly than was adapted to the requirements of voyages.

In spite of all the zeal, the frequent retirement of experts and the short-dated periods of service rendered the achievements demanded by the Admiralty quite impossible. We were brought into a well-nigh dangerous situation by the abolition of the petty officers' categories. Thus the whole of the quartermaster's *personnel* was done away with and replaced by men from the crew, so that the duties of the quartermaster had to be put upon the officers.

Just as this abolition of necessary specialists and the introduction of the two and a half years' service period (which was too short for a training in navigation) did not suit the material and personal characteristics of the navy, so, inversely, the land training was screwed up to an importance which it did not possess.

The summer squadrons were not put into commission until May; they were expected to do the utmost at once, and they dispersed again in the autumn before

they could do anything at all. Then in the autumn the crews came ashore, mostly to the depots, but they were not arranged in categories as was done la- — but treated just like regiments. There was no time left during the short summer manœuvres for any battle, or even squadron, training, and indeed scarcely any time for the roughest training in ordinary ship routine. In the words of one admiral, the squadron training in battle tactics resembled "an attempt to mould something solid out of loose sand."

Strict watch duties, in the military sense, were introduced on board the ships and devoured time and energy without having any real use. We had to wear the uniform with the hussar's sash introduced by Stosch, even on watch in the tropics, until one officer fainted on the bridge; then white drill appeared once more. Further, mobilization on army lines was introduced. Formerly the commissioning of ships had lasted several weeks, but later on we gave it up, so to speak, and kept the ships permanently in commission. Stosch, on the other hand, demanded that since a regiment was mobilized in three days, the same should be done with the ships. The fact that the complicated microcosm of technical matters which a ship represents, interspersed with the most varied requirements and considerations, does not form an organism if all the material is thrust on board within three days, was passed over at this period with a big sponge. Stosch was never a sailor, and in addition, his advisers who were not always well chosen, neglected to

translate his military ideas into our terms, and if necessary even to oppose him. There were too many commands, and too few questions, and consequently the sinking of the *Grosser Kurfürst* in 1878, which was partly due to this militarization of the navy, brought the storm of criticism to the surface. From that time onwards more attention was paid to the requirements of a voyage, and to the ship as an organism. Later, Caprivi and I raised the standard of training in the fleet; in particular, by re-introducing a greater continuity in the *personnel*—in so far as the shortened period of service permitted. In the naval academy which Stosch founded at Kiel he inspired the right idea of teaching fewer special subjects, and promoting general education and independent study. A great deal of mathematics was taught, besides philosophy, natural and nautical science (regarding which we sent many observations to the museums during our voyages), and astronomy, which in any case can be reckoned among the special sciences. The history of naval warfare was insufficiently taught in those days and little was to be gained from maritime law; political economy was only added under my administration. In the course of years the academy has assumed a more specializing character, although I have always urged against its being made a purely preparatory school for the Naval Staff, and against being allowed to rear scholars who were not capable of turning out spick and span. I also tried to confine the technical side of the teaching at the schools

—including the academy—more to special courses, in which they had more facilities for keeping up with the new developments in technical matters than they had at the academy, with its restricted time and limited supply of models. More fruitful than the technical instructions in the naval schools were the scientific shipbuilding and engineering sections. It is not that the officer has to make these things, but he must be able to criticize their construction. The technical side is so subdivided to-day that the constructor himself is ignorant of the details. In addition the mind of the pure technician is not absolutely adapted to other tasks. There are indeed from time to time engineers with a universal grasp at the head of great undertakings, but the organising vein is more often found in lawyers or merchants. In addition to the military questions, however, particularly those of increasingly complicated tactics, the naval officer has other matters, such as organizing, legal and political, to attend to. The higher naval officer must have spent some part of his life in the great world. The higher mathematics, so valuable as mental gymnastics, are, to a certain degree, dangerous for the naval officer. The subject is too absorbing in its inexhaustibility, and its exactness can, like any other theory, lead a man to underestimate the *imponderabilia,* and to forget that the art of generalship is not a logical science, but is born of intuition, and formed primarily of personality. Therefore those categories which rise to the highest positions ought not to be trained as specialists.

It is good for them to have specialized in some work and to know what it means and the sum total of mental and physical labour that it contains; but their own line should diverge from the technical.[1] Specialization became more and more dangerous to the navy. So much the more do I consider Stosch's educational system, which aimed at an all-round training, to be correct.

Among Stosch's efforts to establish a similarity with the army, he instituted a Naval Staff Course, and extended the Naval Staff which he had created, actually giving it a badge of its own on the lines of the "qualification stripe" of the General Staff. In the navy, however, one must not remain long ashore or else one forgets one's seamanship. Moreover the navy's active service is much more varied than that of the army. The General Staff permeates the whole army like a vitalizing nerve-cord, as a second safeguard side by side with the hierarchy of the commanders, as an assistant reporter for the commanders, and depending with them upon the personal connection between the Corps Staff and the great General Staff. Such a second nerve-system is inconceivable in the navy. The holding together of great masses,

[1] Apropos, I mention here the principle introduced by Lord Fisher in England of standardizing the officers' corps so that the gentleman who had been trained to engineering could serve just as well on the bridge. The British naval attaché in 1913 gave as the reason for this so-called Selborne system the desire to weaken the advancing democratic influence of the trade unions in the engine-room by giving it a military point. This system does not imply any military progress.

questions connected with advances, and similar problems disappear here; there are only a few individuals, namely, the ships, to lead. Even in the epoch of wireless telegraphy, the fact still remains in naval warfare that the commander must be sole ruler on board his ship; and in just the same degree the chiefs of the squadron staffs cannot have gentlemen under them who have outside connections. Stosch's Naval Staff course was therefore put on one side again; those officers who are now appointed to the Naval Staff are preferably taken from the fleet. This very proper abolition of the Naval Staff course rendered it more difficult to promote gifted young leaders to responsible posts at an early age, but this difficulty could be overcome by other means in case of necessity.

How far Stosch proceeded from the standpoint of a land-general is indicated by the scheme for the establishment of a fleet that he drew up on taking over office. His ship-building programme aimed at a small concentrated raiding or "sally" fleet as the kernel of the navy—the "sally" was a land term to begin with—whilst the remaining ships were to be distributed along the coast as a kind of garrison facing the sea. The nature of the Baltic harbours then made it necessary to construct these ships with flat bottoms, thus producing a cross between a sea-going ship and a coastal-defence vessel without any outstanding character. The idea of distributing a portion of the forces along the coast was not a good one, for when the moment came to strike they all had to be concentrated

again. The army model of distribution of effectives is not adaptable to the fleet; for a ship is in itself an instrument of attack. Stosch passed over such things in his dominating manner.

III

If the beginnings of the Imperial navy were hampered by the dominating prestige of the army, yet Stosch, as I said, was ahead of his time in the energy with which he pushed forward our sea power that had been neglected for centuries.

He attached great value to the posting of cruisers to foreign stations, and rightly too in his time. For the political conditions in the South American States, for example, or in China and Japan, were not yet so far developed as to allow diplomatic or consular procedure to suffice in every case; the actual power on the spot decided the day.

As far back as the seventies Stosch was convinced that we must acquire colonies, and that we could not continue in existence without some means of expansion. He considered that the prosperity of the young Empire would only be ephemeral if we did not counterbalance the decided disadvantage of our position and history overseas before it was too late.

At that time we could have obtained better colonies more easily than was the case later. Apart too from colonial ambitions, the navy was permeated by a striving after knowledge of world economics, all the more since the news service was only feebly devoloped by

professional consuls. When we were abroad with the *Friedrich Karl* in 1872 we had orders to "explore," to report on all places both as to what they were suited for and what economic importance they might have for us. I still remember how I reconnoitred the island of Porto Grande in the Cape Verd Islands; it was almost barren, high rocks with a few scattered palms, but it was the natural coaling-station between Cape Town, Europe, and South America.

During our visit to Curaçoa we got the impression that the purchase of the island was being considered, and it is possible that our next year's commission, a voyage to Hawaii, was connected with something similar. But in the seventies Germany did not understand such symptoms. Moreover, the shameful fact that we had to let the bulk of our increasing population emigrate abroad, as we were not yet in a position to export goods instead of human beings, stood in peculiar contrast to our political reputation. Stosch busied himself with all imperial questions that were connected with the sea, particularly the development of our stunted mercantile marine. He met with a good deal of opposition, but succeeded in setting the standard for shipping affairs in the Federal Council; he made use of the Hydrographic Office, the Naval Observatory, and of our relations with the Hanseatic Ambassadors in order to strengthen his position. Sailors' schools, in which the navy was directly interested on account of its supply of recruits, pilots, tonnage questions, lighthouses, surveys, the fisheries of

which I spoke above, all consular affairs—in short, all the petty matters of the sea were this indefatigable man's field of activity. He broke down in ruthless fashion the old tradition of giving preference to the machinery of foreign countries, and of England in particular. Even if this youthful period of German industry brought to the fore abundant cases of the so-called "children's ailments" of machinery, the succeeding period has been grateful to our old chief for his policy.

Stosch took up again the broken thread of the Hansa; he was the first to feel his way towards a future for Germany overseas. He did a great deal also to breathe a belligerent spirit into the navy. Mistakes were made, but in those days it was not a trifling matter; a grave earnestness characterized our work.

CHAPTER III

THE CAPRIVI ERA

1. Caprivi's fundamental idea. Preparations for the approaching war on two fronts. Coastal defence. The twelve tactical questions. The Naval Staff. Our first plan of operation. The lack of a shipbuilding programme.—2. Caprivi, Imperial Chancellor.

I

In spite of the strenuous drill, the chances of war were really very slight during the Stosch era, in view of the international situation during the seventies. In those days the young Imperial eagle made its first flight across the sea in peace. While we had to keep two things in mind at the beginning of the twentieth century, the enormous and yet so vulnerable importance of Germany's peaceful labour throughout the world, and the dangers of war which threatened the mother country on all sides, Stosch had not to reckon with any immediate enemies. The first real manœuvres held by Stosch, which were on the smallest scale, took place in 1882 shortly before his resignation. As a matter of fact it was scarcely possible to carry out manœuvres in a tactical sense since we had not yet been trained to such a pitch; it was really only an exercise in the simple multiplication table, so to speak. Much time was expended on artillery exercises

and simple shooting practice, but the most important feature then was the firing of concentrated broadsides at a range of only 200 and 500 yards, a fact which speaks for itself.

In Caprivi we had a new chief at the head of the Admiralty in 1883, who adapted all his work to the idea of war, under the influence of international conditions, although he also followed his own bent. Caprivi was the typical General Staff officer. This man, who was understood by very few people, lived and weaved his plans in the state of mind which he often expressed to me as follows: "Next year we shall have a war on two fronts." Every year he expected it the next spring. He was far less a politician than Stosch. When he was afterwards summoned by the Emperor William II, some time after Bismarck's departure, to take over the Chancellorship according to command, he said bitterly to Field-Marshal Loë on the way to the Castle, "I am now going to bury my military fame." In the words of Prince Friedrich Karl, he was "a good man spoiled" for the navy, and ought really to have been Chief of the General Staff.

Under his influence the navy acquired a politico-military character. Whether this was right or not may be left out of the question, but it was at least an idea. Under Stosch the navy had not known for what strategic end it was working. The bulk of it was absorbed in the formalities which may be called going through "evolutions"; it was practising what is known

as wheeling to the right and the left in company drill. The mobilization existed only on paper. Caprivi held an inspection in the spring of 1883, and was overcome by the enormous working activity which was going on without any proper guiding idea.

As it was impossible to do anything on a very big scale with any speed, and as the weakness of the navy under Stosch had always lain in the fact that it was expected to attempt more than it could perform, Caprivi restricted himself until the next war to the preparation of strong coastal defences against Russia and France. If this "two-front" idea is not taken into consideration, it is easy to make unjust criticisms of his imperfect realization of the navy's tasks. He said to himself: First of all the war which is coming the day after to-morrow must be settled and then we can go on developing the navy. He proceeded to get into close personal touch with the work, and even conducted the manœuvres, which were now held every autumn, with various general and special projects as in the army. They were generally directed against the coast, the one party attacking it and the other defending it.

At that time I had already won a certain position in the navy, as the creator of the torpedo section, and could permit myself some criticism of the backwardness of our tactics. Besides, I was related to Caprivi, which fact, however, was rather dangerous with one of his nature, so that I really never got away from the tie. But I could speak frankly, and I said to

him: what we especially lack is some grasp of tactics; we do not know how we should fight. Caprivi did everything in his power to take up this suggestion. He put the so-called "twelve tactical questions" to a series of officers whose judgment he respected. It was always premised that the French were against us, and the questions were then asked: How will the advance be regulated? What order of battle should we adopt? How would one behave in the *mêlée* which (in Caprivi's opinion) would ensue under any circumstances?[1]

Caprivi instituted Naval Staff tours, during which problems were set on the following lines: Russia and France declare war upon us; the Russian fleet wants to join the French, and we are to prevent it. It was from such situations, which served as the guiding line of the discussion, that a gradual advance was made from mere coastal defence to the demand for a High Sea Fleet. Caprivi's activities culminated in his working out personally our first plan of operation after he had instructed himself in the matter; then he brought me in for consultation. The plan consisted roughly as follows: I was to run a torpedo division into Cherbourg the moment war was declared, and then the battle fleet which we possessed was to proceed to Cherbourg and bombard the place. Caprivi is also the real originator of our mobilization.

[1] For my part I still considered it probable that a kind of cavalry engagement must develop if a battle were fought to a finish.

In spite of his grasp of tactics, Caprivi had no definite shipbuilding programme. It is true he saw that the Navy could not live from hand to mouth. On the one hand, however, he had been too far removed from naval matters all his life, and on the other, the views that prevailed in the naval officers' corps itself were far too vague to allow a definite shipbuilding policy to crystallize. Caprivi was amazed at the chaos of shipbuilding schemes. I explained to him, in reply to his frequent questions, that a decision on the composition of the fleet could only proceed from clarity in tactical ideas, which had not yet been obtained. Finally the political ideas of the chiefs crippled shipbuilding. On the occasion of the introduction of the two years' service period in the Army Bill of 1893, Caprivi, who was the Imperial Chancellor, said to me: "We must not think of the creation of a strong German navy until the international and psychological necessity of a war with Russia, whom France will join, has been concluded." Our continental orientation, which had been one-sided for centuries, made us overlook far too easily before 1896—what Bethmann overlooked in July, 1914—that England's European policy of the Balance of Power would have intervened if we had beaten the Dual Alliance.

His activity as Chancellor must likewise be interpreted pre-eminently by his idea of the "two-front" war, for politics as politics were not in his line. His friendliness towards the Poles had its root in his endeavour to establish an element there which would

not be too hostile to us in the event of war. When I was spending some weeks with King Humbert of Italy in 1893, Caprivi commissioned me to say to him, "The decision will take place on the Rhine." At the dissolution of the reinsurance treaty, Caprivi, as I happen to know from him personally, was actuated by the feeling that the treaty was not quite honourable in view of the unavoidable war: in addition it was depriving us of Austria's confidence. Caprivi had once gone with Prince Friedrich Karl on an official visit to Russia after 1870. While there he felt everywhere the hatred and the jealousy of the St. Petersburg officers towards the widely famed Prussian army, which I myself can confirm from my own experiences. We had won too many victories. Caprivi used to tell how Czar Alexander II disregarded the German officers quite noticeably, until he suddenly rushed up to them in one of the rooms and said to Caprivi, "You have no idea how I like you, but I daren't show it here." Knowing Caprivi as I do, I consider it inconceivable that he was subject to any English or court influences on the occasion of the dissolution of the reinsurance treaty. In order to bind Austria more firmly to us in the event of war, he concluded the commercial treaty of 1891 with her on terms that were unfavourable for our agriculture.

Caprivi found no time to cultivate our maritime interests as Stosch had done, neither did his own personality urge him to do so. He belonged to the class

of the sons of officers and government officials whose thoughts are far removed from economics, and who are not attracted by the subject. The lonely man, with no requirements of his own, brought with him little sympathy for the development of industry. He was therefore an opponent of colonial expansion at first, although when ordered he performed the military share of the acquisition of colonies with skill and energy.

II

When I attempted during my period of office to do justice to the money-making classes, and in the spirit of Stosch to revive once more the cutlivation of maritime interests that had been broken off in 1883, I ran up against many of the irregularities which have arisen during the course of German history. Misplaced economy and petty bureaucratic narrowness have made our way into the world difficult. The navy had more ample occasion to feel and realize this than the army. Its duties on the whole gave it a certain world-perspective. Until the great war, the army took the study of the world, and particularly of England, much less to heart. In all essentials it marched into the world-war with the old ideas of a "two-front" war, and with a natural superiority which it possessed over the navy in consequence of the prevailing land tradition in Germany; it still looked upon the fleet indeed as a kind of pioneer detachment of the army, unmindful of the fact that the real main front was the sea front,

now that a grave but not hopeless fate had made us the target of a world-coalition. In short, this insistence on Caprivi's standpoint under completely altered conditions was one of the historical reasons for the war taking the course it did. But more of this later.

In contrast to the land officer, the naval officer was referred to the study of overseas forces. Intercourse with foreigners moreover rounded off the rough Prussian edges in him, without killing his appreciation of the indispensable traditions of the State. For it must never be forgotten that Prussia has fashioned in her officers one of the few fixed German types, and moreover the type which has enabled us to appear as free men in the world again, since our complete lapse into foreign slavery after Frederick the Great.

"La vie au roi,
L'honneur pour soi,
Sacrifiant son bien,
Chicane pour un rien,
Voilà l'officier prussien."

Between 1870 and 1914 the German State was too young to fashion a German type of its own. This fact did us harm in the world.

The relations of the English naval officers' corps with their German comrades were still free from jealousy in Caprivi's time. The prevailing tendency in official policy at that time to regard the British fleet as the complement of the Triple Alliance almost brought our relations to that pitch of friendliness which such an alliance implies, but this was con-

stantly avoided by England when practical issues were broached. The prestige we gained in 1870 helped us over our naval inferiority in our relations with the French. We admired in the French the pride of a beaten people which never forgets its honour for a moment, and we smiled many a time at the *romance verve* of their desire for revenge.[1]

Feeling against the Germans became intensified after the nineties owing to various reasons. We older men remember with peculiar feelings those days under William I, when we were still distinguished people in the world, and were well received. But this gloom which settled around us could hardly have been relieved by the "victory on both fronts" of Caprivi's imagination, and even of the General Staff's plans in 1914. For it arose especially from the unexampled growth of our overseas trade, and from

[1] One little scene is characteristic of this. When we fell in with a French squadron off Salonika in 1876, both of us seeking satisfaction for the murder of consuls, the French were not allowed to mix in our society; they were not allowed to accept a glass of wine even when they were on active duty with us for several hours. Once when a French commander came on board I paraded the crew, and since he was impressed by it he could not but invite me to see the same on his ship. I went, and all the formal courtesies were gone through. When we went into the battery, however, gun-drill was taking place there, and the officer in charge gave the order: "Direction: Babord contre la frégate turque, tribord contre la frégate Kronprinz!" Whereupon the gun crews turned round and grinned at me with pleasure. The commander, however, dealt with the officer in private. No painful scenes occurred then as they did later during the public celebration of the opening of the North-East Canal in 1895 (a demonstration which was distasteful to me), when the French and the Russians behaved so unpleasantly.

the irritation created by Germany's conquest of the world's market. The annoyance of the English at our upward movement was scarcely to be felt during the Caprivi era, but it had come to light in all its strength ten years afterwards, about the middle of the nineties, long before the beginning of our real naval construction.

The accession of the Emperor William II closed the epoch of the naval generals. Stosch and Caprivi belonged to the flower of the Prussian army in Germany's greatest epoch; they had taken leading parts in the wars of union. I was honoured by co-operation with these great-minded masters, and when I took over the Imperial Admiralty in 1897 I tried to collect into one volume the varied lines of thought which they had both displayed, under more spacious conditions. For various reasons, however, the naval administration by no means prospered in the interim, but sank into chaos for nearly a decade.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNICAL MATTERS

1. The torpedo-boat arm. In Fiume. The elaboration of my method. State and private war-industry. The navy's system of supply.—2. Work *honoris causa*. The development of the torpedo-boat. Every warship a compromise.—3. Personalities.

I

SINCE I was twenty-nine I have had the good fortune to be employed uninterruptedly in positions of independence, among which in fact there was not one of those "soft jobs" that now and again fall to the lot of members of the General Staff. My rise is bound up with the development of the torpedo arm. Whitehead in Fiume had invented the automatic torpedo which brought within firing range those vital parts of a ship below the water line, which could only be attacked hitherto with the ram of a vessel; it thus promised a revolution in naval tactics and shipbuilding. Stosch had introduced the fish torpedo overhastily, and had bought large numbers of them before they were really serviceable for war. The use of it still constituted "a greater danger to the man who launched it than to his enemy." People were too optimistic about it, and, as is often the case with new weapons, had anticipated the change before the new idea was really practicable.

When Stosch realized this he asked for special reports in the autumn of 1877 from the chief of the torpedo section and certain of his subordinate officers, and these he read himself. My report drew his attention to me. In the winter of 1877-78 I was sent to Fiume to deal with Whitehead about the torpedos, which we did not consider of any use. I succeeded in getting rid of half our order, which Whitehead sold elsewhere.[1]

From May onwards I led the torpedo section as commander of the *Zieten.* I began, so to speak, with nothing at all, and often worked partly like a mechanic with my own hands, making myself an apparatus. When the Crown Prince and the Emperor inspected the navy in 1879 and 1880 I was allowed to demonstrate in torpedo-firing, and the unexpected and certain success of this helped to strengthen Stosch's position again, which had been shaken by the *Grosser Kurfürst* catastrophe.

I proceeded with the torpedo section, just as I did later with all new inventions, whether airship, submarine, or anything else. I refrained from the premature

[1] On this occasion the threatening war between Britain and Russia in 1878 (in which I was ordered to support the Russians as far as I could) produced a peculiar impression of Hungary's relations with Austria. Whitehead, who was a thorough Englishman, refused to supply the Russians; the Hungarian Government under Tisza prohibited the export of torpedoes, so that we were compelled to try to take the torpedoes, which we had already bought, across the Austrian frontier, which was only an hour distant, on the recommendation of Austrian gentlemen, although they were German property. The Hungarians then set up honved outposts, so that the matter had to be settled diplomatically.

adoption of new devices, but acted energetically as soon as I saw that the matter contained some real possibility of development. I have always found this method to be the only right one. It was very often a difficult part of my duties to prevent myself, as Secretary of State, from getting agitated by the impatient throng of inventions which came rushing in from all sides during this epoch; but it was also a very important one, if we were to set up a first-class navy with our limited means in the short time instead of a museum of experiments. We were overwhelmed with unripe inventions which had first to be sifted by instinct, so as not to fritter away and overburden the energies of the authorities. Once I was unable to put on the brake, and the success of the construction of the fleet was endangered by haste, which was our greatest enemy in the whole undertaking.[1]

In my work in the torpedo section I first set myself to perfect the technical accuracy which is necessary in everything connected with shipping, and which in

[1] An example of this. When wireless telegraphy came in it promised to fulfill a long-felt need in the navy for the transmission of orders from ship to ship at long distances. Everybody pressed therefore for its introduction on a grand scale—the navy, the firm directly interested in it, and of course the Emperor. And yet it was not ripe for use at sea, nor was the introduction of business competition at all desired. During my absence in America, however, its installation was carried through in spite of the opposition of my deputy. The consequence was that the necessary development came to a standstill for the time being; moreover, we had to spend a great deal of money quite unnecessarily on the installation, and had endless trouble with these technical difficulties. Naturally I got the blame and I was now attacked because of its ineffectiveness.

all my labours I continuously kept in view. The Whitehead torpedo was all right as far as the idea went; but it still had too much uneven engine work, and consequently lacked the necessary clockwork precision. The same thing occurred in the case of the submarine, which likewise requires work of the best quality. For the first time in Germany we obtained this workmanship, upon which serviceability in time of war depends, in the torpedo arm, and even the English did not quite reach the high level of our torpedo firing. When I gave a demonstration of the Whitehead torpedoes before the Crown Prince in 1879, in spite of many weeks' preparation, it was still a toss-up whether they would reach the target or ricochet wildly. Fortune smiled upon us, but I afterwards said to Stosch that now we must get to work on our own standard of precision.

The Admiralty next approached the German factory of Schwartzkopf, which had been advertising so widely the merits of their bronze torpedoes that the Admiralty wanted to give it a monopoly. I opposed this; in the first place because a share-holding company which has a monopoly easily pays too much attention to its annual dividends, and not enough to the development of the product; secondly, because I was convinced in this case of the advantages of steel over bronze; again, because in the tendency towards home-production that was growing in the bigger foreign navies, no foreign money would have come to Germany as a compensation for us; and finally, because

the most important experimental work on the water could not be done by the firm, but was our own special prerogative. Thus I succeeded in calling into being State torpedo-workshops; the progress of the torpedo arm is indicated by the increase in its range, which only amounted to 400 yards at the time of its general introduction to the navy, but rose to 12,000 yards by the winter of 1915-1916. The nationalization of torpedo-production did not affect the opinion I held that State workshops are only suited for special and limited purposes, and that repairs are generally carried out better, and certainly more cheaply, in State workshops than in private concerns.

In order to avoid as far as possible the accumulation of expensive war supplies, I followed the principle when I was Secretary of State of keeping private industry, and contractors generally, prepared for the event of war. At that time I gave out our contracts, including those for provisions, clothing, coal, etc., on the condition that the contracting private firm made arrangements to proceed forthwith to an increased output in the event of mobilization. For these preparations for mobilization we had to pay rather higher prices in some cases. I have often been attacked for acting on this principle, but it was only by so doing that we were able to help out the army with 2,000,000 kilos of gunpowder up to the beginning of 1915. The army was supported far more than we were by State workshops, but it was not prepared for the enormous requirements of the world-war—and at that time it

had almost emptied its magazines,[1] and was saved by the navy from the gravest danger.

In spite of the military advantage of a recognized, uninterrupted mobilization, the navy system of supply had possessed the great economic advantage that we were able to keep the unused stores quite low in times of peace and consequently lay out to productive ends the small amount of money which Germany could spare us; and further, if it came to the worst, we could only rely on carefully considered peace-time arrangements, and were thus relieved of the danger of over-hasty war-contracts.

I have often been attacked in the Reichstag because of my attitude to private enterprise and contractors generally. Parliament begrudged the private firms the big orders, and, with one eye on the State-socialism of the future, inclined more to the principle of State factories. Even in future wars any overstraining of the State-mechanism or any check upon private industry would lead to the most dangerous crises.

II

I mention here a small matter which I would not broach if the Revolution did not threaten to change so fundamentally our old conditions.

Schwartzkopf had explained to me the advantage

[1] The competent officer at G.H.Q. told me as early as in October, 1914, that Verdun was not attacked any more on account of the shortage of ammunition, since it was not desired to expose the Crown Prince's army to a reverse.

which would accrue from the purchase of some of his shares which, as was to be expected, had trebled their value in consequence of the naval contracts. Naturally I did not buy any shares, and would have dismissed any official who acted otherwise. Our State always premises in its servants that nobility of feeling by which it had risen to greatness under the Prussian kings. I am reminded of the Finance Minister who arranged the purchase of the Prussian railways, and on resignation left his own office in the most unsatisfactory condition. The salaries in certain high offices were not in just proportion to their importance and the expenses they incurred. When I was Secretary of State I had to draw on my own income at first in order to meet the calls my office made upon me. It goes without saying that our officials worked for the honour of the thing. With a minimum of expenditure we performed a maximum of creative work. Thus the State administration in the old Prussia-Germany was cheaper and cleaner than anywhere else in the world. After the expenditure of State money, and the creation of innumerable sinecures, which are bestowed upon persons more for their politics than for their fitness for the posts, it is to be feared that the new State will not be like the old. The old German State has been weakened and broken by a period of mediocrity at a time of the greatest danger; but the German nation will never be lost so long as it does not lose the clean character of the old administration. The corrupt German is worse than the corrupt Italian

or Frenchman, who at least never betrays his Fatherland.

The German cannot afford to abandon that uprightness which was the palladium of his old civil service, for he lacks the other political qualities which help to render almost all other foreign nations immune from the poison of corruption. Even during the last generation one could notice the harmful influence of the materialism which was penetrating into the upper classes of Germany, in the shape of a weakening of character, a diminution of that positive idealism which the German nation will always have to exert in the interests of its own self-preservation. For it is only by proud, unselfish devotion to the State that it can counterbalance the deficiencies of its geographical position, its bad frontiers, its limited area, its jealous neighbours, its religious differences, and its too young and too uncertain national sentiment.

As then chance gave me for my first important task the development of the torpedo *arm,* and was so kind to me that we were able to overtake the performances of other navies in the same province, I was able to obtain at the same time an insight into the workings of the mind of a factory director. But I was glad when the torpedo *boat* brought me back to my natural field of activity, viz. tactics. In my whole progress the line of development from the technical to the organizing side by way of tactics has been repeated again and again.

Stosch opposed the torpedo boat, which had already

been constructed in England. But when I was working out the first manœuvres at his orders in 1882, things went so well with our experimental boats, which were bad in those days, that Stosch began to take an interest in torpedo boats. Then Caprivi, who recognized in the torpedo boat a means which corresponded to his strategic ideas, commissioned me to develop the torpedo-boat section. There was a great variety of opinions on the subject. Some wanted small coastal boats. I demanded sea-going vessels which could fight in the North Sea, and the struggle between the advocates of sea-going ships and those who supported the coast-defence scheme continued through all my activities down to the building of the submarines.

Even before the pattern boats, which had been ordered from various German and English firms, were completed, Caprivi asked me to devise suitable tactics with the older boats in the summer of 1884. Thus, the growth of tactics preceded the development of the more cumbrous technical side, just as it did later in the case of tactical work with the big ships in the nineties.[1]

In the meantime the boats which we had ordered arrived, the Admiralty having wrongly left to the discretion of the different firms a number of important considerations, such as sea-worthiness, cheapness, size,

[1] Cf. Chap. VI. For the rest, I never shared this infatuation for torpedo boats, and pointed out to Caprivi that this auxiliary arm, which (like the submarine later) was bound by its very nature to become obsolete, could never be a substitute for a battle fleet which was our real need.

and so on. The firms were therefore obliged to act without any military knowledge and to rely on their own methods; one aimed at cheapness, and the other at speed, and so on. But every warship is a compromise of different desires which can never all be fulfilled at one and the same time within the limits of the finished article. A certain armament, fuel storage, accommodation, buoyancy, armour plating, speed, are all wanted with a given displacement; then there is a fight in the committees over a matter of 25 or 50 tons; and if one wanted to satisfy everybody, one would soon have a 100,000-ton ship without having settled anything at all. Thus it is the strategic idea of the ship which must be firmly determined before anything else; in the nature of things, however, only the supreme naval command, and not the firm, can decide this.

The new boats proved to be either unsuitable or undeveloped; we were involved in some danger with them in a storm off Norway. Caprivi discovered a way out of the conflict between the Admiralty engineers and myself, on the subject of the type of torpedo boat, by instituting in 1886 a Torpedo Inspection Board, which he handed over to me, and which covered all branches of the torpedo section. We elaborated the sea-going boat armed with artillery. The fleet training, the dockyards, and the workshops were now controlled by one hand, which had its advantages at this stage.

III

As Inspector of Torpedoes I had to report myself, along with other officers, to the old Emperor. He spoke with each individual in such a friendly and fatherly manner that everybody was deeply touched. Then he stepped into the middle of the circle, assuming quite naturally a kingly attitude, and reminded us in earnest words of our duty. It was all so simple that one's heart was moved; one felt the mind of this man, who had the State before his eyes in everything that he did. One would have suffered oneself to be torn in pieces for him.

In 1887 Prince William, afterwards Emperor, went to England to attend the Jubilee of his grandmother, where he was coldly received, probably on account of the medical controversy regarding his father (*wohl schon wegen des Aerztestreits um seinen Vater*). I commanded the torpedo flotilla which accompanied the Prince, and which was to be paraded quite unnecessarily before the English. It was at this time that I got to know the Prince, who plunged with a passionate interest into everything connected with the technical side of the navy.

The next year Caprivi handed over the Admiralty to Count Monts. The latter had an undisguised dislike of torpedo boats, which was indeed shared by almost all the older officers of that time, partly owing to a natural distrust of everything new, and partly because younger officers were appointed to independent

commands in the torpedo section at an age which they considered was not sufficiently ripe. At any rate, at his first inspection of the flotilla, Count Monts declared that the whole thing was mere show, which would be useless in battle.

Thereupon I asked the leader of the Naval Cabinet for a command at sea, and further, that some restraint should be imposed upon Count Monts lest he should prejudice the torpedo arm.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW COURSE

1. Caprivi leaves the Admiralty. The fatal division of naval authority. The chaos. Memoranda. An "imposition."

WILLIAM II had sketched some types of ships when he was still a prince, and, as he did not come to the Admiralty, he had had a shipbuilder brought from the fleet for this favourite pastime of his. As soon as he had ascended the throne he summoned the chief of the shipbuilding section to him. This disregard of the Minister was contrary to the old Prussian traditions, and gave Caprivi the formal ground for handing in his resignation. Caprivi wrote to me that he would not have suited the young Emperor for long; that the Emperor did not like him, and only made him Imperial Chancellor later because it was thought that some strong man was needed against the Bismarck *fronde*. The deep-seated reason for Caprivi's departure was, however, that the Emperor wanted to divide the powers of the Admiralty, in order to be able the better to intervene himself. Bismarck, who had been discomfited in his collisions with Stosch by the powers united in the hands of the latter, unfortunately favoured this splitting up of the naval

administration (1888), which had a harmful effect in peace-time, and was almost fatal in war.

In 1859 the naval leadership was split for the first time, and the executive command was separated from the administration. The several conflicts which resulted from this division ended in reversion to the old system under Stosch in 1871. And now in spite of those previous experiences, the executive command and the Admiralty were once more separated in 1888; in addition, a special Naval Cabinet was established and attached to the Monarch, and all three authorities were granted direct access to the Sovereign. The field was now open for play and counter-play, for three or four different naval policies.

There now appeared upon the scene a kind of Cabinet Government which had once before dug itself into Prussian history. If the Cabinet had restricted itself to advising the Emperor on the selection of the highest officials, and had left the responsibility together with liberty of action to the latter, then there would have been no objection to a Cabinet that was provided with some knowledge of human kind and character. As this condition of a triple responsibility developed, it was only in August 1918, when almost everything was lost, that the Admiralty and the supreme Naval Staff reunited in practice to form a supreme Naval Command, after they had been played off against one another for decades, and the intervention of the leader of the Cabinet was now abolished. The internal struggles and obstacles which

hampered the practical work of the divided authorities during times of peace were naturally unknown to the general public.

If William II's burning desire to establish a navy had begun to be fulfilled in 1888, we might perhaps have attained our object before the grouping of the enemy Powers became so dangerous. The ten years lost between 1888 and 1897 compelled us either to inscribe a permanent "too late" on the aims which Germany's sea-power was striving for, or else to cross a political danger zone by proceeding with the building of the fleet.

In 1888, however, it was difficult for the Emperor to find suitably trained officers for the leading posts. Perhaps the navy was not yet old enough, and the success of Caprivi's efforts to exert an educated influence on the officers' corps could only bear fruit later.

After the short periods of office of Count Monts and Admiral Heussner, Admiral Hollmann came to the Admiralty in 1890, a high-minded man who was, however, never quite clear as to the direction to be followed. Caprivi had worked according to a principle which was only half correct from the navy's point of view, but now there began a period in which decisions were taken which were absolutely devoid of principle and adapted only to the needs of the moment. It was the tendency during this period to bring forward demands in the Reichstag which were based not so much upon requirements as upon the

probability of their being granted. Every fraction of a cruiser was disputed in the Reichstag, and the catchwords "zigzag courses" and "boundless plans," with which Eugen Richter worked against the navy in the Reichstag, were difficult to refute. Worse than this, every authority in the navy wanted and proposed something different. The aimlessness of it all was felt everywhere, and produced a chronic crisis. The confusion of opinions displayed itself, for instance, in the heterogeneous collection of vessels, from which one could not confidently expect any mutual co-operation in the event of war. In justice one must add that no navies at that time were at all clear as to how a modern naval war would develop.

After I had commanded the *Preussen,* and then the *Württemberg,* in the Mediterranean from 1889 to 1890, I was to have been made Director of Dockyards, but as the result of a remark made by Chancellor *v.* Caprivi to the effect that I should be kept in a position which would better prepare me for responsible commands, I was appointed by the Emperor to be Chief of Staff of the Baltic Station in the autumn of 1890. There I had ample opportunity of observing the conflicts between the Executive Command and the Admiralty, both of whom were working equally badly.

In the spring of 1891 the Emperor was once sitting with us officers after dinner in Kiel Castle; the old Moltke was there too. At the Emperor's suggestion a discussion took place as to how the navy should

be developed. The most varied views were expressed in the usual fashion, and without throwing any real light on the subject. Being a junior captain, I kept out of the discussion. Finally, the Emperor said, "Here I have been listening to you arguing for hours that we must put an end to all this mess, and yet not one of you has made a really positive suggestion." The Chief of the Naval Cabinet, von Senden-Bibran, who had read one of my memoranda, nudged me encouragingly; I took the hint, for it was painful for me to hear the Emperor make this drastic criticism in front of the old general. So I described how I conceived the development of the navy, and as I had been continually jotting down my ideas on the subject, I was able to give a pretty complete picture without any difficulty.

The next day the Emperor got up early and walked for some hours with the Chief of the Cabinet, talking excitedly all the time, and drawing up a kind of "imposition" to be done by all naval officers who had taken part in the conversation.

CHAPTER VI

TACTICAL WORK

1. Commissioned to develop the tactics of the High Sea Fleet. My preparatory school for this in the study of torpedo-boat tactics. The "black company."—2. Training the High Sea Fleet. Line tactics. The squadron principle. The English in arrears.

I

When I was appointed Chief of Staff to the Executive Command in January 1892, and was personally commissioned by the Emperor to develop the strategy of the High Sea Fleet, I had behind me a more thorough schooling in tactics and strategy than any officer in the navy. I was always attracted by historical studies; I was soon conversant with the ancient and modern history of naval warfare, and, as a matter of fact, the insipidity of modern accounts generally sent me back to the original writings for my information. I also continued to study the history of land warfare, not from mere inclination, but in order to obtain, a deeper psychological knowledge of my own subject. I should think I have read everything of any importance that has been written upon Frederick the Great, and the Wars of Liberation of 1866 and 1870.

When I was a young gunnery-officer on board H.M.

ships in the seventies I was fully alive to the changes wrought in our service by engineering. I was all the time striving to get at the fighting values of it all, and I remember the joy which the first recognition of my independent working methods gave me, as for example, when a French captain gravely remarked on inspecting my battery: "Je vous vois travailler pour le but final." The task which had been set me in 1877 of elaborating the torpedo arm had banished me, as I have already said, to a purely technical field of work, and the difficult and painfully exact task of developing inanimate material was less congenial to me, although, like mathematics, it trained me to methodical procedure. I perceived, however, that the new submarine weapon, whose laws had to be discovered, opened up prospects for the militant qualities of the German nation to rival the larger navies of older and richer states. The precise methods of work which my mechanical experience had taught me soon stood me in good stead in my tactical experiments.

The special courses which I had arranged for the training of officers and ratings of torpedo craft during the winter months led us to consider the problem of single combats between ships. Very little methodical work had been given to this subject at that time. We also sought to develop the art of manœuvring vessels independently. I had excellent officers at my disposal, who transmitted all that they had learnt from us—and particularly our methods of work—to

the other vessels of the navy. One special object of my manœuvring course was to teach the naval officers to act on their own initiative much more than had been customary, owing to fear of collision. Before my time the single ship had hardly been given any training in independent manœuvres, but had been straightway worked in squadron formations, in which one ship is bound by the others. It was my principle now to train the individual hoplites before forming the phalanx. This secured a high certainty of movement, which attracted much notice when I was able to proceed with apparent daring as commander of the *Preussen* and *Württemberg* in the first operations with heavy ships in squadron formation; in reality my ability to do so was due to practice, but it was often wanting in the other ships owing to the weakness of their individual training.

Besides training the single ship for the duel, I was also working upon the complicated co-operation of several units, when I was commissioned to work out tactics and organization for the new torpedo craft. The great risk of collision had made not only us, but foreign navies, too, nervous of real battle practice with torpedo boats. Those countries which are parliamentarily governed have found by experience that it is almost impossible to hold naval manœuvres which really reproduce war conditions. But we overcame the nervousness of public opinion most effectually, and gained thereby an advantage in preparedness for war. In all the mishaps that occurred to our ships during

manœuvres I supported on principle the officer concerned, but I also demanded the most stringent sailor-like precautions at sea.

Whilst working out these fighting formations, I endeavoured to impress upon the officers that we were able by these means to find out practically everything that was wrong, but we were not certain to discover what was absolutely right for war; we could not therefore lay down any dogmatic rules. In view of all the incalculable possibilities of battle, the supreme tactical principle for torpedo boats was "Close up, and fire at the centre"; in other words, when the moment had come for attack, to stake everything on the safest shot; the torpedo that hit the enemy was the best protection against his artillery. The second principle was more general; it bordered on strategy and ran as follows, "Act according to circumstances." This sounds simple, and a matter of course; but most persons in such situations prefer to act according to orders, instead of following their own responsible decision. If the officers in the higher commands believe that they themselves can ensure success by their own directions, then this tendency, which has its drawbacks in a crisis, always leads to a flood of regulations and battle orders. There were times in the years leading up to the world-war when assurance of victory was far too prevalent in our navy, and this always has the dangerous result of leading to spectacular fighting formations and showy manœuvres. After I was detached more and more from the fleet,

to my great sorrow, in 1897 I had no opportunity of effectively combatting these growing dangers, although my own earlier work convinced me that I saw quite plainly the results of these methods. This weakness for the decorative side, and the drilling and polishing that it entails, tend to quench the living spirit by mere routine.

Our work with the torpedo boats had helped considerably, even in Caprivi's time, to determine the development of the navy from the coastal-defence idea to the High Sea Fleet.

A special arm like torpedo boats must be allowed, if it is to produce its best, a special status and comparative independence in the main body of the fleet. Later on, the torpedo boats were included in the fleet in somewhat too arbitrary a fashion, and a cruiser was put in command of them; and this had more drawbacks than advantages, at least as regards the use of torpedo boats at night.

I spent the eleven best years of my life in the torpedo section among "our black comrades, of the wild and daring chase." We were bound to our incomparable crews by ardour and mutual comradeship in storm and danger. We officers of the torpedo section constituted a corps within a corps, the united spirit of which was everywhere recognized, but also envied and opposed. When I became Chief of Staff I took over the whole of the "torpedo crowd" with me, and so I had a trained body of workmen at my immediate disposal. I tried to do the same later at the Admiralty,

but there my wishes as regards *personnel* met with opposition in the Naval Cabinet.

II

When I joined the Executive Command in Berlin in 1892 the necessity for improving the fleet training to meet the demands of active service was perfectly clear to me. To this end a corresponding organization had to be created for the fleet before anything else, and the short-dated commissioning of ships in the summer had to be done away with, in favour of keeping ships permanently in commission. At that time the Admiralty was at work unwisely arranging the whole navy on the lines of the army, in such a way as to transfer the centre of gravity of the navy to the land.[1] I prevented this, for it was only possible to give the fleet any tactical training by means of permanent formations which manœuvred and were composed in peace-time as they would be in war.

Soon after taking up my new duties I went to see the Naval Secretary of State, and told him that I would regard him as my leader in every way, but that he must give me a free hand with regard to the intellectual training of the navy. We parted good

[1] On mobilization, each vessel was to give up half its crew for newly commissioned ships, and to make up its complement with recruits. This would have meant the break-up of the whole internal organization of the ship, and consequently the squadron formation which had been trained with so much trouble; and our readiness for war would have been destroyed. We should have had a crowd of ships with men on board, but no fleet.

friends, but Hollmann did not go into my request in detail, and expressed the view that the Executive Command would have to make itself scarce. At this stage of our tactical proficiency this opinion could only be vindicated if the Secretary of State himself took the tactical training of the navy in hand, as Caprivi had done when Chief of the Admiralty. Hollman, however, had no intention of doing so, for he was completely absorbed by parliamentary difficulties. On the other hand, the draft of a series of exercises evolved by a commission was made official and given binding force. But this new regulation contained nothing but evolutions, *i.e.* merely the movements of ships, so to speak, in empty space, the transitions from one "quadrille" to another. The real fighting value had no place there, nor could it have, since people were not clear as to how they intended to fight, whether in the manner of Nelson or Tegetthoff. They exhausted their imaginations in discovering and manœuvring in theory as many formations as possible, from which the Admiral was then to make his choice.

I replaced these "roundabouts" (*karussel reiten*) by the principle of first making it clear to ourselves how we had to fight in battle. The next autumn manœuvres in 1892, which were arranged to this end, resulted in a new quarrel between the Admiralty and the Command, in the course of which the new regulation was replaced by one that I had evolved myself. To begin with, we improved the individual training of the ships, and then proceeded step by step.

It was only human that this intervention from above was not appreciated by the commanders and the squadron chiefs, and I was given the nickname "Master." Towards autumn we collected all the ships that we had in home waters, and formed a manœuvring fleet which operated under the personal direction of the Executive Command. As we arranged them in fighting units, regardless of the class of vessel, we combined numbers of ships which had hitherto never worked in company. It could be said that men fought here, and not ships. For the navy was so small that we could only establish large battle-formations and manœuvre them one against the other by scraping together all the training ships, mine-sweepers, and other simulacra that we possessed.

It was then that we began operations in larger formation, and without more ado we dropped a number of practice formations which had been highly esteemed until then, including the wedge and square. Between 1892 and 1894 we discovered our line tactics. The main feature of this was to keep the enemy in the centre of our line, no matter how he manœuvred. In addition we discovered our squadron principle. Until then there had been no theory of naval warfare, and no certainty as to what number of vessels constituted the most effective squadron unit. Helped by the nature of our line tactics on the one hand and the success of our intensive training on the other, we fixed upon eight ships as the most favourable norm for formations fighting in a line; in the event of more

vessels being at liberty, more squadrons were formed which were to fight in a series of lines. Thus there arose out of our tactics a new organization which exerted a determining influence upon the Navy Bill. On the basis of our results I also reintroduced the old designation "Ship of the Line" into the navy.

I cannot avoid the impression that the real meaning of the squadron principle is at times not fully appreciated. The perfectly natural tendency of the Commander-in-Chief to lead the whole fleet as a tactical unit only meets the case in certain situations. On the other hand, it is usually only a certain independence on the part of the squadron commanders that can produce the highest effort on the part of the fleet. The larger the fleet, the more difficult it is to handle when concentrated. Its manœuvrings become clumsier, and the commander is easily prevented by smoke, rain, and particularly powder-smoke, from reviewing the position of the various sections. This is the most important reason why we decided upon the squadron as the tactical unit, and thus gave the squadron commanders and the equivalent leaders of flotillas the right to act "according to circumstances." The full realization of this idea is also connected with the endeavour permanently to adjust the organization and method of the navy to the training of men who possess the gift of leadership.

Soon after us all navies proceeded to adopt some kind of line tactics and our squadron principle. Thus

it may seem strange to people to-day that no navy in the world had yet formulated any definite principles at the beginning of the nineties, and that the "wedge and square" question, for example, still played a considerable part in the specialist literature of those days; whilst even the Athenian Phormio had overcome by his line the Spartans, who clung to their land ideas and formed a square at sea under Brasidas. Whilst we were discovering these things quite empirically on the "small practice-ground" by Kiel Bay, the American Admiral Mahan was simultaneously evolving them theoretically from history, and when I made the acquaintance of his book later, I drew his attention to this extraordinary coincidence.

The English seemed to me to be very behindhand in their tactics at the time, a fact which was illustrated by the Tryon trial following upon the sinking of the *Victoria*. The truth of the matter was that the English had no need for tactics. The Battle of Trafalgar had removed all competition in sea-power, and from that day onwards the theoretical as well as the practical development of naval warfare came to a standstill, whilst the balancing of the Powers kept the science of war active enough on land. The British navy, with its overwhelming superiority, could more or less shoot any opponent to pieces. We were not in such a position. By our example, however, the English were once more compelled to work and to apply their minds again to naval warfare. At first the English troubled very little about the small German navy.

Their attention was drawn to our work by means of official memoranda which were either stolen or acquired from a sunken torpedo boat. About 1896 the British navy began to have the feeling that we were competitors, and since they began to regard us in that light, they have studied us and followed similar lines in their own manœuvres. They will never confess that they learned from us in this way. It is so, however, and we were quite aware, even at that time, that the British navy received the new spirit of its development from us. The fact that a navy which had practically no ships at all should lead the way in method, reflected Germany's position in the world. We had either to build ships or else give our ideas to foreigners. We built the ships, and in soundness and tactical achievement, but not in numbers, they were actually superior to the English during the world-war, although England had long since recovered from her place of tactical torpor and hazy manœuvres.

Those years saw my greatest achievement, the infusion of a militant spirit into the navy. But like everything else, the tactical and strategical work of my life lacks the stamp of final success. The unfounded prestige of the British navy robbed Germany's leaders of their courage at the beginning of the war, when the German navy had the best prospect of giving them victory. The Battle of Jutland, interrupted as it was by darkness, was not fought to a finish. If it had been, there would in my opinion

have been a prospect of putting quite a different face upon the history of the world. The bitterest fate awaited the German fleet, and I was denied sailing out with it.

CHAPTER VII

NAVAL SCHEMES

1. Service publications. Sea-fight or cruiser warfare?—2. The necessity of a fleet for Germany. Correspondence with Stosch. Attitude towards England.—3. My 1895 plan of operations. Acquisition of Heligoland.

I

Our tactical discoveries resulted of their own accord in a definite and desirable concentration of *matériel.* The activities of the Executive Command which had been put down in "official memoranda" consolidated into concrete proposals for the construction of a High Sea Fleet. When I returned from Eastern Asia later to take over the Secretaryship of State, I replied to the question, "What is going to be brought into the Reichstag?" with, "All that is contained in the ninth memorandum."

In spite of the tactical results of these official memoranda and their recognition by the Emperor, the Admiralty under Hollmann was still working for a cruiser war; it even urged the Emperor in this direction and represented the same views in the Reichstag, without any system at all, so that the Reichstag was just as unable as ever to understand what the navy was out after.

In the winter of 1894-5, a number of Reichstag deputies were to attend a naval conference in the Potsdam Palais; at first it was intended that I should report to them, but later the Emperor decided to address them himself. I learned that the Emperor intended to speak unreservedly in favour of a cruiser war, and to influence the Reichstag in this direction. It happened that I had to report to the Emperor for the Executive Command the day before, and I seized the opportunity to inform the Emperor of the contents of that memorandum, which represented the *battle* to be the object and the centre of gravity of our tactical organizing development. The Emperor was vexed, probably because it meant disturbing the scheme of his address, and he asked me, "Why was Nelson then always calling for frigates?" I replied, "Because he *had* a battle fleet." At any rate the outcome of my representation was that the Emperor spoke about both cruiser war and battle fleet to the deputies the next day, with the result that they had less idea than ever of what was really intended. One portion of the Reichstag observed a distrustful and hostile attitude towards "personal naval whims"; Herr von Leipziger, reporter to the commission on navy matters, groaned aloud to me that evening in Potsdam and said, "If only we knew which way they really want to go!"

In the autumn of 1895 I asked to be relieved of my office on account of new conflicts with the Admiralty. My successor was Admiral von Diederichs,

and Admiral von Knorr took over the Executive Command, without bringing, however, any relaxation in the conflicts and chaos of these years. In December, 1895, the Command handed in a memorandum on the necessary naval construction; I was commanded by the Emperor to give my opinion on this scheme, which I did both in writing and by word of mouth during the New Year (1895-6).

II

Two lines of thought were emerging at that time: the *tactical* necessity for a *battle* fleet, *if* we were striving for sea-power and wanted to build ships to some purpose; and the *political* necessity of establishing a protecting navy for Germany's maritime interests which were growing at such an irresistible pace. The navy never seemed to me to be an end in itself, but always a function of these maritime interests. Without sea-power Germany's position in the world resembled a mollusc without a shell. The flag had to follow trade, as other older states had realized long before it began to dawn upon us. As *The Fortnightly Review* put it, both tersely and correctly, in 1893: "Commerce either engenders a navy which is strong enough to protect it, or else it passes into the hands of foreign merchants, who already enjoy such protection."

A certain freedom from care and misgiving, the predominance of internal economic and social matters, still obscured this necessity from the mass of the Ger-

man people. The Emperor had realized it, and had been enabled to do so by his frequent visits to England, where both he and his family soon felt quite at home. The tendency of the Emperor to interfere too prematurely and too noisily in world-politics, and his inability to move in a world of realties—a difficulty which was felt quite clearly by his people—hampered his efforts to arouse in them an enthusiasm for the expansion of the navy. Indeed the idea of a navy was received with much suspicion among the people. The Germans were pampered by the good fortune which Bismarck's creation of the Empire and the sudden stirring of our long-repressed economic abilities had brought us, and they did not realize that our development on the broad back of British Free Trade and the British world-empire would continue only *until it was stopped.* We owed the growth of our physical and material strength to the growth of our industry. We increased our population by a million human beings every year, which means that we acquired annually the equivalent of a province within the unalterable and narrow limits of native soil; and all this depended upon the maintenance of our export trade, which for lack of our sea-power depended solely upon the favour of foreigners, *i.e.* our own competitors. It was as Bismarck said: we had "to export either goods or people." In the long run the decision to form a power at sea was only an attempt to keep a population German that was not increasing in its own colonial settlements, but in the workshops

at home. The question was whether we were not too late for the partition of the world, which was then almost complete; whether indeed that expansion to which we owed our place among the Great Powers was not artificially and permanently untenable; whether this swift rise would not be followed by a terrible downfall. The "Open Door," which could easily be closed, was to us what their broad plains and inexhaustible natural wealth were to the other Powers. This, combined with our hemmed-in and dangerous continental position, strengthened me in my conviction that no time was to be lost in beginning the attempt to constitute ourselves a sea-power. For only a fleet which represented alliance-value to other great Powers, in other words a competent battle fleet, could put into the hands of our diplomats the tool which, if used to good purpose, could supplement our power on the continent. The object in view had to be the institution of a constellation of Powers at sea, which would remove the possibility of any injury to or attacks upon our economic prosperity, and would transform the brilliant semblance of our world-policy into a really independent position in the world. In order to bring this home to the German nation, I considered that a process of enlightenment on a large scale was required, to be executed with the reticence which foreign jealousy demanded. The question was whether this should be taken in hand by the naval administration itself, failing my other more suitable organization.

I should like to elucidate the train of my ideas in

those days, by reproducing a correspondence that I had with my old master Stosch.

"Kiel, 21. xii, 1895,
"Schwanenweg 25.

"Your Excellency,

"I have the honour to request you most dutifully to inform me whether the following argument agrees with the views and the long experience of Your Excellency.

"It deals in the main with the question as to whether a larger concentration of the maritime interests of the Empire is to be attempted than heretofore, and whether the Admiralty (*Reichs-Marine-Amt*) is to be selected as the centre of crystallization. If I estimate correctly the policy that Your Excellency pursued in this matter as Chief of the Admiralty, then Your Excellency proceeded on the above lines. Regarded from the historical point of view, it is the standpoint adopted by Colbert and Richelieu in their day, when they were engaged in extending the power and economic sphere of France in this direction. If this object were obtained for Germany, then the growth of individual interests would lead again to disintegration. Up to 1866 our maritime interests were completely prostrated: sea-trade, export industry, trans-Atlantic colonies, sea-fisheries, Germanism abroad, the navy. All that survived of these had the character of a 'parasitic existence.' A great deal of this issue still remains. In my view Germany will swiftly sink from her position as a great Power in the coming century if these maritime interests are not brought to the forefront energetically, systematically, and without loss of time. In no small degree also because there lies in this new great national task, and the economic

gain which is bound up with it, a strong palliative against educated and uneducated Social-democrats.

"We cannot allow these interests to develop 'with a free hand' (Manchester-fashion), because there is no time left for such methods. Neither must our carefully planned procedure be in any way bureaucratic. The aforementioned interests can only be placed upon a sound basis by power, and indeed sea-power. Otherwise we shall lack the courage to draw cheques on the future. The 'parasite' must be changed on principle for *civis Germanus sum*. One particular difficulty lies in the fact that the expenditure on military sea-power must be made opportunely and in full realization of the economic advantages that will accrue. Narrow-mindedness and the shop-keeping spirit—which only considers the personal gain of the moment—must be added to this.

"In spite of all this I believe that there is a growing current of opinion in Germany that is favourable to this idea. It will be the particular duty of the central authority to strengthen this comprehensively and persistently. If the Admiralty is chosen for this task, there is the advantage of being able to begin with an official body which contains in itself greater maritime interests than any other single Government department, and, moreover, an authority whose greatness and right to existence depends primarily upon the maritime interests, *as the navy is only a function of these latter.*

"The question would then be: will such an amalgamation as this contain the danger that the other non-military maritime interests will be treated too much as secondary interests? or *vice versa,* that the exclusively naval interests will suffer owing to the activity and advertisement of the former?

"Further, as a fundamentally opposite standpoint

has been adopted since 1883, and as the other interests have secured good treatment (which, incidentally, was sometimes bad) from other Government departments (Foreign Office, Home Office, Posts, the various Federal State Governments), is there still time and opportunity to strike out for this greater concentration, and its resultant greater development of the maritime interests?"

A short time afterwards Stosch wrote to me as follows:

"Haus Stosch,
"Oestrich im Rheingau,
"*Februaray 12, 1896.*

"My dear Admiral,

"I am sending you a question to-day. The anger of the English with us, as shown on the occasion of the Transvaal telegram, 1896, has its root in German competition in the world-market. As foreign policy in England is dictated solely by trade interests, we have to reckon with the opposition of this island nation. This will crystallize as soon as these gentlemen succeed in assuring themselves of the antipathy of France and Russia, and we are beginning to feel uncomfortable again.

"All the English articles that I have read lately take the view that they would knock out Germany with one blow. I have also put to myself the question as to how we could conduct a naval war with England with any success, and I now turn to you and ask you to answer this for me. I may add that I have drawn up a plan of campaign of my own, but as I attach value to your naval judgment, I am very eager to hear what you would propose. I hear from Berlin that your departure to Eastern Asia (as Squad-

ron Commander) has been delayed; they are thinking after all of reducing our naval forces there in the interests of those at home. So you have had time to busy yourself with big questions.

"Be so kind as to fulfill my request. Good-bye.

"Yours,

"Von Stosch."

I replied to this from Kiel on February 13th, 1896:

"Your Excellency,

"I have received your kind letter of the 12th inst., and hasten to reply to it. . . . Very urgent and unexpected business took up my whole time in Berlin. I should like to inform Your Excellency in confidence, and only for Your Excellency's immediate ear, that I have had an opportunity of vindicating in the highest quarter Your Excellency's views on the necessary expansion of the navy, and there is hope that the thread will be taken up once more where it was broken off in 1883. Perhaps I shall be able to give Your Excellency fuller details later. My appointment to Asia has become very doubtful, as your Excellency must have heard. For my own part I am very distressed about it. It was my burning desire to go out there, and it would also have been good for my nerves to have got away from this exhausting mental strain for a time, and to be right away from Madrid. I must now wait and see what fate has in store for me.

"With regard to the Transvaal question, I take the opposite view from the public and our political leaders, and consider that we have acted wrongly.[1] England puts up with a slight from America because the latter is a source of some anxiety to her, and more than any-

[1] By sending the Krüger telegram.

thing else because America is an unpleasant opponent, and Germany pays the bill because at the moment she has no sea-power of any weight. At the present time our policy is building on the army alone as a material basis; but the army is only effective on our land frontiers, and, in addition, only directly so through the pressure exerted from within. Our policy does not understand that Germany's alliance-value, even from the point of view of European States, does not lie altogether in our army, but in our fleet. For example; suppose Russia and France are standing together in some matter against England. The assistance of our present fleet would be too small a factor to be of any importance. But if England formulates her policy on the model of Pitt, she will prefer our hostility to our strict neutrality. We are an extremely valuable asset in any circumstances, and in the event of our remaining neutral we should gain in the most extraordinary way by being England's competitor. England knows this very well too. *Up to the present our policy has failed completely to grasp the political importance of sea-power.* If we intend to go out into the world and strengthen ourselves commercially by means of the sea, then, if we do not provide ourselves simultaneously with a certain measure of sea-power, we shall be erecting a perfectly hollow structure. When we go out into the world we shall come across interests everywhere that are either already established or to be developed in the future. This means conflict of interests. How then does the most skilful policy think to attain anything without a real power which corresponds to the many-sidedness of these interests, now that the prestige of 1870 has faded? Sea-power alone comprehends the many-sidedness of world-policy. Even if it does not come to war, therefore, we shall always come off worst politically.

It must also be taken into account that England has lost some of her belief that we should send our army to fight for her against Russia. On the other hand England can make Russia very considerable concessions, in Eastern Asia for example, if Germany comes off worst. In this last fact lies the danger, if we become involved at the present time in a conflict which affects Russia, France, and England. Also even if we propose to say that we were not going to war for trans-Atlantic interests, the other three States would not say the same, so we are continually working at a political disadvantage. A great deal more could be said on this point. But I just wanted to show that I did not arrive at my conclusions about the Transvaal question of the moment without some reflection. As a matter of fact, I conceived this opinion the moment I had read the telegram to President Krüger in the newspapers.

"This telegram was not even skilfully worded, for since England possesses the right of sanctioning this State's conventions with foreign countries—a fact which we cannot deny—we were not in the position to offer the Transvaal *our* help.

"This incident may, however, have its good side, and I should think that a much bigger row would have been actually useful to us, in the sense that it would have opened the eyes of our Parliament; firstly, to put a definite stop to the Anglomania of certain circles, and secondly *to arouse our nation to build a fleet* on the lines of memorandum 9. This estimate is actually to be included in the next Budget. The Government and the leaders of the Reichstag, to be sure, see no prospect of success. By representing unreservedly the military and political value of our present fleet, the Admiralty has at least discharged its obligation, and history will have to call other people to account.

"My policy is therefore to create within the next twelve years a fleet which is in keeping with the requirements of the same, and whose strength shall not be far removed in essentials from that laid down in Your Excellency's first memorandum of 1872. . . ."

Jameson's raid upon the Boer Republic and the Krüger telegram had blundered into the middle of this correspondence. The outbreak of hatred, envy, and anger which the Krüger telegram let loose in England upon Germany contributed more than anything else to open the eyes of wide sections of the German people to our economic position and the necessity for a fleet.

But whilst German public opinion hailed the Krüger telegram with joy and vented itself in repeated philippics against England during the next few years, I considered the Krüger telegram itself, and all the ensuing challenges to England, to be both regrettable and dangerous. They betrayed a widespread ignorance of England, of her power and of our impotence. The attempt to form a sea-power, which was difficult enough in itself because it was undertaken so late, was further endangered thereby, although England's isolation at that time and her difficulties with the Boers obscured from the eyes of the people the danger zone which we had to pass through in building a fleet.

I still maintain to-day that the attempt to work our way through to real world-political freedom by the construction of a fleet could not be left untried. The German people will not lack occasion during the years following the world-war to test the truth of this, and

to feel what it means to be left to the mercy of the Anglo-Saxons. Any person who is convinced that we were altogether unsuited to become a sea-power in consequence of our historical backwardness, and that we ought to have accepted the guardianship of Great Britain from the outset, must naturally condemn the workings of my mind in those days. If I had not had faith in the great future of the German nation upon the earth, I should never have possessed the strength to build it a fleet. So far I may have been deceived, although I am convinced that this attempt to attain world-political freedom would have succeeded if our policy had observed greater caution in the one direction and greater energy in the other. With other leadership we had well-founded prospects of asserting ourselves in the world-war. But if people had *not* wanted to build the fleet, but to go the way of renunciation from the nineties onward, then we should have been compelled to slacken trade and industry of our own accord; we should have been compelled to re-start emigration, and to have allowed our foreign interests abroad to go to rack and ruin. Then, as Lichnowsky says, we should have had to leave the field to the "Anglo-Saxons and the sons of Jehovah," and to have contented ourselves with our old reputation of being the salt of the earth, the fertilizer of mankind. It was, and is, an illusion, however, to think that the English would have treated us any better, and have allowed our economic growth to have proceeded unchecked if we had had no fleet. They would have

certainly told us to stop much sooner. Anybody who knows the English could have no doubt of this. The threatening outcry in English journalism of the 'nineties is not by any means the only sign that the irksome but impotent German competitor would be struck down at the first safe opportunity. The German considered it his *bona fide* right to spread himself peaceably over the world and outflank English influence everywhere, and in general he did not sufficiently appreciate the feelings of the man in possession who looked upon him as an intruder. Moreover, people in Germany had a wholly inadequate conception of the peculiar composition of English power and of its ability to encircle Germanism with mental and material forces, until the world-war revealed the truth.

III

The plan of a German battle fleet was evolved without any idea of a war with England. It would have seemed perfectly crazy both politically and strategically to have waived the possibility of a later attack upon England. Before 1896—that is, under Caprivi —the popular idea was, as I said, to regard England as the naval complement of the Triple Alliance against France and Russia. There was also no reason at that time to draw up defensive measures against England. The plan of operations which I drew up in 1895 has the "two-front" war in view, and reckons in all its details upon a neutral England. I started on the assumption that we were to open the war against France

not as a cruiser war, but with an engagement at sea. This is the origin of our construction of a battle fleet, but the unexpected demonstrations on the part of the British navy at the beginning of 1896, as well as the trade jealousy which was breaking out more and more undisguisedly, were naturally bound soon to add an English front to the French one. After the Krüger telegram the English put a flying squadron in commission against us. This brought a new point of view into our shipbuilding deliberations, and caused Stosch to draw up the plan of operations for defence against England which he had discussed privately with me. The first official plan of operations against England was not drawn up by the Naval Staff until the beginning of the twentieth century.

How wide of the mark was this charge that England made against our navy, and how fully we were occupied in our work on the "two-front" war, is shown by our attitude towards the treaty which gave us Heligoland in exchange for Zanzibar in 1890. As a matter of fact I had wanted Heligoland as far back as 1870, and had said so in a letter to my father which contained a kind of first navy scheme, but the possibility of anchoring there, which was open to a French squadron in 1870, was now no longer to be feared since we had torpedoes. We never thought of the value of Heligoland, however, in a war with England. The island's importance for naval warfare did not really arise until I decided, daringly enough from the engineering point of view, to make a harbour out of the

island, which would make its cliffs a base for our naval forces and would render more difficult a close blockade of our coast.

Caprivi's reason for acquiring Heligoland was therefore not so much its military importance, which we hardly took into account, as the desire to put us on good terms with England.[1] The considerable concessions which he made in Africa for the correction of a "beauty spot" on the German coast aroused some indignation in Germany at the time. Personally I never put the value of Zanzibar very high in 1890, because the successful development of German East Africa must necessarily attract trade past the island to the mainland.

I had already been chosen for the Secretaryship of State at the time of that correspondence with Stosch. But when Hollmann obtained a vote of confidence in the Reichstag, Prince Hohenlohe hesitated to make a change of *personnel.* At Easter, 1896, I received my appointment as Chief of the Eastern Asiatic Cruiser Division, and incidentally the good fortune to obtain one more glimpse of Germany's interests overseas before I took over the Admiralty and began building the fleet. I took with me from Berlin the commission to seek out a place on the Chinese coast where Germany could construct a military and economic base.

[1] As a matter of fact the navy greeted the new possession with mixed feelings as the fortification of the island deprived the navy of sums which were excessive for those times.

CHAPTER VIII

TSINGTAO

1. Need for a German base in China. An impossible choice. With the Russians. Tsingtao, not Amoy.—2. Form and extent of the lease. Tsingtao is kept under the Imperial Admiralty. The "Empire" of the navy. Economic development and pioneer work in civilization.—3. Germans abroad and the navy. Securing German sentiment abroad. —4. Naval maps. The high school in Tsingtao.—5. The loss of Tsingtao.

I

GERMANY took a leading part in the opening up of China to the world's trade, but she could never depend upon the Manchu Government to understand the fact that Germany had a friendly interest in the preservation of China's independence. Apart from everything else, the lack of a base hampered us, because the sole factor of power which protected German labour and made any impression upon the hostile authorities was our flying squadron, and the existence of this depended upon the Hong-Kong docks and consequently upon the favour of Britain. If German trade was ever to cease being a go-between for English and Chinese products, and to begin putting German wares on the Asiatic market, it needed its own Hong-Kong just as our squadron did.

The three places suggested to me were Amoy, a

thickly populated little island with a treaty-port northeast of Hong-Kong, the desolate Samsah Bay farther to the north, and the Chusan Islands on the eastern tip of China near Shanghai. Tsingtao (Kiauchow), of which there had once been some talk owing to Richtofen's recommendation of it, had been "dropped," I was told, because it lay too far north and off the great trade-route; moreover my predecessor in office had declared Tsingtao useless. Besides this, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty were influenced by political reasons in their preference for Amoy; they feared Russia would object to an establishment in the north, and the British had a right of pre-emption in the Chusan Islands.

The statements of numerous engineers and merchants, as well as my own reading, led me to the conclusion, even before I had seen them, that all the three places suggested to me were unsuitable and that, apart from treaty-ports and Chusan, there was only one place for the German who had once more arrived too late, since the British had searched out the whole coast as far back as the 'forties, and that was the unset pearl Tsingtao. A base must be useful to the fleet, it must promise economic prosperity and offer possibilities of defence. My chief demand was capacity for economic development; it did not seem advisable to me to establish a purely military base.

When I inspected Samsah Bay some time later, I found a narrow entrance with a dangerously strong eddying current; green islands which lay in the gi-

gantic bay turned into steep cliffs when the tide was on the ebb. The desolate expanse of water was surrounded by mountains which could only be crossed with pack-mules. How was the fever- and typhus-ridden bay ever to compete with Fuchow with its half-million people which absorbed the trade on the River Min, not far off on the other side of the mountain!

The Chusan Islands were as little suited for defence as Samsah Bay or Amoy. Above all, however, they lay off Shanghai, just like Heligoland off Hamburg. Trade passed by them. There was the probability of complications with England, moreover, if we went for them.

Amoy, an English settlement, which we had no right to take, promised but slight economic advantages. It was still an export-harbour for coolies to Manila; its tea trade was falling off; its important geographical situation with regard to the monsoons, which had been so important for sailing ships, had depreciated more and more through the introduction of steamships; the whole place was on the down grade.

In Tsingtao there was a possibility of building fortifications. There was an enclosed bay; the northern climate was in its favour. The absence of a waterway and the presence of a poor, over-populated province as its hinterland did not deter us, as there were overwhelming signs of unusual scope for development. All information pointed in the same direction. In short, if Tsingtao was not to be included in the number, I saw myself faced with an impossible choice.

One day during a walk on the beach at Chifu I met Lieutenant-Commander Braun, my old flag-lieutenant, who was in command of the *Iltis*. He and I had worked together for eleven years, and he had been my right-hand man on the Baltic Station. We were thoroughly attuned to one another, and he understood me immediately; he looked over my preliminary plans, and the next day he came on board saying that he felt as though scales had fallen from his eyes. I was glad of his opinion, for it was the only reliable one that I could get on the matter. I told him that I would write out an order for him to go to Tsingtao to carry out researches there and report on them.

He went, and on that occasion was caught by the typhoon and sank with the *Iltis*. I was now compelled to send the sailing-orders to Berlin which had contained the order for Braun to inspect the Bay of Kiauchow. I now said to myself that I must go one step farther, and, although I would have preferred not to have aroused attention in view of the European rivalry, I proceeded myself to Kiauchow with the flagship *Kaiser*.

Previous to this I met the new ambassador, Herr von Heyking, who was on the same mission as myself, in Chifu with his wife. I asked him for a private interview on official business, and soon noticed that I had made a mistake, because his clever wife, afterwards author of *Letters Which Did not Reach Him*, was the chief assistant. Heyking reported that the

Kaiser told him at Potsdam that now he had sent out his best ambassador and his best admiral, surely the pair of them would come to some conclusion, and had asked him what he was aiming at; whereupon Heyking had replied, "At Amoy." I asked the Ambassador, "How could you mention a place which you don't know?" and he answered, "But I could not leave his Majesty without a positive answer."

Thereupon we agreed not to make for any definite place without inner conviction, and I wrote down the points upon which we were agreed. Each of us was to examine the different localities with his apparatus, and we were to come to a mutual decision after I had had my ships overhauled in the Hong-Kong dockyard in December (this dock had always to be booked nine months ahead), in order to be ready to take possession. I then proceeded to investigate Tsingtao, and thence went to Vladivostock to let my crews recuperate in the north. Here I met an old friend from Fiume, the Finn Virenius, who was commander of the Russian flagship. Whenever I met him he always took me to lonely places, which my German mind did not at first understand; but once, when Admiral Alexiev, who was afterwards Governor-General of Manchuria, was visiting me and I happened to treat Virenius as a friend, the Admiral asked in a strange tone, "What, old friends!" whereupon Virenius turned pale and from that moment he ostensibly kept away from me. So Alexiev distrusted his own flag-captain! On another occasion I had invited the international society

and the *élite* of Vladivostock to dinner on board, when I received news from Berlin that the Czar had been made a German Admiral. I raised my glass and toasted the Czar; the French Admiral, who was present, and his suite remained cold, but the Russians were forced to take it in a friendly way.

Alexiev was a pronounced Francophile. In spite of this fact I should have exposed myself to ridicule as a naval officer if I had not frankly admitted in conversation the need for a German naval station. Alexiev tried to divert me to the Chusan Islands, which was quite comprehensible from his point of view, for then we should have been permanently thrown into the balance against England out there. I received reliable information that the Russian navy had considered the acquisition of Tsingtao, but had abandoned the idea as superfluous and even inconvenient for Russian interests. I learnt the same from Peking, but also that the Russian ambassador there was meditating claims to Tsingtao in spite of this refusal by his navy. Heyking and the Berlin officials were continually feeling about for the line of least resistance, and expected to find it in either Amoy or Samsah. The Executive Command even returned once more to the idea of the Chusan Islands, and for one moment the exchange of the Cameroons or Samoa for this group was under consideration. I warned against a Chinese repetition of the Anglo-Indian Transvaal friction in the event of our settling in the neighbourhood of Shanghai, and I reported on Tsing-

tao as being the only place in question if we were bent on acquiring a base in China.

At the end of November I received orders from Berlin to remain off Amoy, to cancel the dock, to keep the detachment with me, and to be prepared for action. In reply to my astounded inquiry, Heyking wired back that Berlin had asked whether an understanding had been reached between him and me; he had replied, "Yes, Amoy"; China's declinatory attitude on railway questions gave us a free hand for taking action.

I refused all responsibility for this choice. Apart from everything else, my action would have had to be undertaken with ships that were not in the best trim. We should easily have overcome the miserable Chinese fortifications of Amoy with their Krupp guns and a garrison of a few thousand men; the taking of the populous town was a more serious matter; but above all if political ill-feeling arose between us and England, we could be refused the use of the dockyard, and then we should be left helpless, with ships which needed repairs and upon which Germany's reputation rested in this part of the world.

Days passed, and at last the order came that I was to go into dock when I thought fit. Amoy was never mentioned again. The report, with which I had to reveal the whole situation after the sinking of the *Iltis,* had burst in upon the conflict of opinion in Berlin; the Emperor had summoned to him a man who knew the place and who corroborated all that I had said. Later,

the technical information of the hydraulic engineers, whom I asked for to be sent to Tsingtao, was regarded by the public as the starting-point for the acquisition of Kiauchow. When my successor, Admiral von Diedrichs, hoisted the German flag there at the end of 1897, the Russians brought forward their legendary right of "first anchoring" (on the ground of which England could claim not only Tsingtao, but the whole world, because Englishmen had at one time or another anchored everywhere). The purpose of this was not to create serious difficulties for us, but to obtain sundry advantages for Russia by means of diplomatic protests screwed as high as they dared. It is obvious that the Russians would have preferred to push us farther south into the English sphere, and were not pleased at our establishing ourselves in the vicinity of Peking, where they played the principal rôle at that time. They gave way before the resolute attitude of the Emperor.

II

While I was in Eastern Asia I had already worked out the form of the lease, so that it looked as little as possible like forceful intervention, and allowed the Chinese to save their face; I drew up the lease-treaty in its final form with Herr von Holstein in Berlin. As Secretary of State for the Admiralty I had from now on (1898) to proceed to conquer our newly acquired possession from within and to justify our step by means of peaceful civilizing labour. The

main point was, with a moderate expenditure of capital, to discover values of which the Chinese themselves did not suspect the presence, and with a big flourish in this small compass to show what Germany was capable of doing. The sixteen years of our labours in Tsingtao, which have remained a torso and have been robbed of the far greater development that we had in view, have left an indelible impression upon the foreign half of the world. In comparison with British Hong-Kong, which was fifty-five years older, the development of this desolate fishing place to a town of 60,000 inhabitants and an important sea-port, in spite of strenuous competition, was almost tempestuous, and yet it was in every way sound.

The size of the territory was defined exactly according to our needs. I recommended that only so much should be taken as was necessary for future fortification and the expansion of settlements and factory sites. The whole territory was expropriated by us. I had had experience in Eastern Asia of the great disadvantages which had resulted from a boundless land speculation in the European settlements out there. This is a matter which is also worthy of study at home. We had to make up our minds forthwith in Tsingtao. I therefore bought the land from the people at its then value, perhaps slightly dearer in order to reconcile them; this was a detail in view of the prospective rise in values there. The people could remain on the land by agreement as long as they wanted, if we did not need it. In addition we had an extended

sphere around Tsingtao, the so-called neutral zone, through which we could march troops, and consequently we kept a hand on the surrounding neighbourhood during the disturbances in Shantung.

I insisted, on principle, that Tsingtao should not be put under the Colonial Office. If the matter was going to prosper it had to be left in the hands of one department. The navy had immediate military interests there such as a base demands—quarters, dockyard, harbour, etc. It was better to avoid friction with a special colonial administration. As we had assumed responsibility for this Eastern Asiatic base, it was my opinion that we were better suited to push on its economic development. In the same way I had declared in my letter to Stosch that the concentration of all maritime interests in the hands of the Admiralty was only desirable for a time until these interests had grown to their full strength, and I considered it possible that Tsingtao, once it was "ready," would detach itself from the Admiralty of its own accord. But the time had not come for this. The bureaucracy was not altogether friendly to our little empire. The Foreign Office showed a certain jealousy; the consul who was swiftly dispatched to Tsinanfu took care that our influence did not extend to Shantung.

I share in all essentials Carl Peters' criticism of our original colonial administration. Their initial failure is doubly regrettable because the German possesses in a high degree the stuff of which colonists are made.

He also knows how to keep the natives satisfied. I remember that Lettow-Vorbeck was greeted as a deliverer by the natives when he crossed into Portuguese territory. In any case our colonies would have developed much more favourably in many respects if they had been connected from the very beginning with the military authorities at home. This would naturally have been too great a burden for the navy itself. It was only when the Navy Bill had materialized that I wanted to leave my successer the task of getting to close grips with the construction of bases abroad. The Colonial Office did not take this into consideration, although they were a necessary condition for the development of a possible cruiser war, and above all for the linking up of Germandom abroad. But apart from this, how easily could something have been done for the defence of German East Africa if one had only troubled more about it in time of peace! The navy has indeed given both work and blood for the other colonies. For Tsingtao we could draw upon the navy for a large number of engineers and officials, whom we could send back again if they did not prove suitable, while the Colonial Office was only a bureaucratic headpiece. We were in a position to build the harbour and lay out the town. Our crews worked in all parts of the territory; we could maintain naval conscription, and all the troops we used there (one naval battalion) were adapted to naval conditions; we had doctors who were accustomed to the tropics, and who were experienced in constructing hospitals, etc. Thus we did not

feel ourselves fettered at every step by the Imperial Treasury and the Reichstag, as would have been the case with the Colonial Office.

In earlier days there had been a steady trade in Kiauchow Bay, but this was paralysed by the silting-up of the harbour. Since we were able to make use of reefs for the construction of an inner harbour within the bay, which was itself protected against heavy seas, this project was carried out at a comparatively small cost. Quays and docks were then built which we could have extended at our pleasure. Tsingtao began to be an import-harbour for the petroleum from the Sunda Islands which was urgently needed in China. A splendid impetus was provided by the Shantung coal, a much-coveted commodity in Eastern Asia. Our own coal deposit in the protected area was of fundamental importance. As soon as war broke out the smelting of the ores which were buried at Poshan was secured for Tsingtao. I effected this because Tsingtao was protected against local disturbances by our absolute rule. The iron-works which were to be erected with steel-mills and crushing-mills facilitated the settlement of industrial undertakings. No iron-works in the whole of Eastern Asia or Western America had such prospects; the iron and steel market there would have passed into our hands, and this increased economic importance on the part of Germany must necessarily have improved our political position, and have reacted upon all other branches of German export.

The increase of the value of Tsingtao was also to be expected because there was not a single natural harbour along the whole of the neighbouring coast, and the possibility of a favourable railway connection was bound to make Tsingtao the outlet for Peking, and indeed—a fact which I saw from the first—for the railway line to Moscow via Irkutsk, which was the best connection between Europe and Eastern Asia, together with Australia. The Shantung railway opened up the neglected hinterland of Tsingtao. Unbounded possibilities of economic prosperity lay before us.

The risings in China compelled us to carry out the so-called Boxer protection, the walling-in of the town area to an extent of 5 kilometres from water to water. Thus we avoided being in direct touch with China and prevented these disturbances from affecting us, to the great satisfaction of the rich Chinese who flocked to Tsingtao. In contrast to Hong-Kong the Chinese were settled in a special quarter, a concession to the Europeans which we might possibly have been unable to maintain in respect of the well-to-do Chinese. The natives soon had confidence in our jurisdiction, and their town, to which we had given a high degree of self-administration, prospered.

The climate was comparatively good; bathing became a great feature of life there. We combatted fever and typhus successfully by erecting waterworks, and the pestilences which devastate China from time to time were kept in check by the sanitary cordon

along the Boxer wall. We also improved the health of the community by afforestation on a large scale. Our plantations became a model for the whole of China, where it had never been believed until then that cleared woodland could be afforested again. The Chinese had cleared the forests to the last twig, and the rains made great ravines in the land. We too found it very difficult to make our plantations grow at first on a soil that was devoid of humus. Their ultimate success however, encouraged the rise of other plantations. This protection of forests so impressed the Chinese that they began to study the subject quite zealously themselves. We established tree-nurseries and instructed the natives, with whom we thus got into closer touch. Round about in the neighbourhood we also taught the inoculation of fruit trees, which was still foreign to the Chinese; they came in crowds to get the grafting-twigs from us, and the fruit cultivation of Shantung increased. The first modern abattoir in Eastern Asia, which we erected in Tsingtao, started our meat export-trade.

We endeavoured to keep on good terms with the Chinese authorities. The more reasonable among them came more and more to the conclusion that the occupation of Tsingtao was a blessing for them. The Chinese recognized us and made a perceptible advance towards us. Perhaps they began to rate us higher than the Anglo-Saxon because theirs too was an old civilization. I am not of opinion that we were at all behind the Anglo-Saxons in actual achievements be-

fore the war, not even from a colonizing point of view, or even in Africa, where perhaps the administration might have been carried out with a wider vision. I do not like to assume that we ought to attribute to the Anglo-Saxons some sort of world-mission, when we could probably have done it better ourselves had we only possessed the material means. The German had still something of the upstart about him; he was not equal to the Anglo-Saxon in self-reliance. But all that we did was so regular and substantial, that in spite of the many orders from above which were issued for the sake of appearances, our achievements even penetrated to spheres which the English regarded as their domain (such as colonization), because we had German diligence behind us.

The rise of Tsingtao was at all events a steeplechase, particularly as it promised to progress at an accelerated pace. The Germans in China gradually began to settle in Tsingtao and to regard the town as a centre for all that was German.

III

The navy had given its heart to Germandom abroad ever since Stosch at the very beginning of his activities established the aim for the fleet of getting to know the world and particularly Germans abroad. How their national pride had suffered during the period of our powerlessness! During the war of 1870 only one German, Herr Siebs, of the Siemssen firm, dared to acknowledge his fatherland in English Hong-Kong;

most of them followed Herr Schwarzkopf's example, who changed himself to Mr. Blackhead. Outside Europe, Germandom has maintained itself by its own strength in the Latin States of South America only, although that much-mistaken rescript of von der Heydt in 1859 actually crippled emigration thither, in the interests of North America, with the intention of providing in fatherly fashion for the future welfare of the German emigrants, who were, however, lost to us henceforward. When Count Bülow proposed in the Ministry in 1900 to abolish this rescript, there were still some voices raised in favour of its preservation. Many millions of Germans who emigrated were lost to us both mentally and physically, and enriched those countries which were afterwards our worst enemies. Without past and present German labour the Entente would never have succeeded in inflicting upon us our present humiliation; one of the bitterest features of our position.

If the absorption by America was unavoidable in itself in view of the conditions which greeted our emigrants there, the manner and the speed with which this abandonment of nationality was accomplished was due to our poorly developed national sense. It was with sad feelings that I witnessed an enormous torchlight procession in New York of 14,000 German ex-soldiers, all in their prime, in honour of Prince Henry. If the question of nationality was ever broached with these people, the answer was generally: We think of Germany as our mother, but America is

our wife and we must stand by her. Still less pleasant experiences were to be had over there. The ideals with which the home country had endowed them were quickly forgotten for the sake of the material advantages of American life. A professor belonging to a good German family, who had been a lecturer at a German University, was once taking me over Harvard University. He had only gone over to America a few years before, but he told me that he had already become an American citizen. The manner in which he said this did not make a pleasant impression on me, and I availed myself of an opportunity to attach myself to another American gentleman for the rest of the visit. Quite against my will the ex-German must have sensed the impression made upon me by his remark, for he said to the naval officer who was accompanying me: "Your chief seems to wonder at my becoming an American citizen so soon, but you will understand, for I have been made a professor here sooner than I should have been in Germany, and so I must be grateful." It was obvious that what this gentleman had brought with him from Germany no longer played any part in his mind. I mention such examples, and I can remember many of them, in order to characterize the lack of national pride, sentiment, and obligation which is fatally inherent in our people.

With these experiences and impressions of the German tendency in my mind, celebrations and the unveiling of monuments, of which there was no lack with us, always left me cold. In keeping with the

national character which they brought with them from their homeland, the 10,000,000 North Americans of German origin have watched Germany go to her ruin, without lifting a finger. Like others, the Irish compel respect, and yet it cannot be maintained that Ireland has given her emigrating children more civilizing values than Germany. To my great grief I was fated to catch the sound of the Swabian dialect round about me in the Tabernacle of the city of the Mormons, and to listen to a missionary, who had been sent into the "land of the heathens" to get converts, describing certain parts of Germany as particularly fruitful for his labours. Almost all over the world one found oneself grieving for one's own nation in spite of its great achievements, and whilst Germans abroad were generally swayed by personal interests, every Englishman became an agent of the Foreign Office almost as a matter of course as soon as English interests were at stake. A beginning had been made, however, just before the war to turn to account the rich capital which we possessed in our Germans overseas. With the growing strength and dignity of the German Empire, and particularly with the rise of its sea-power, even Germandom abroad began to feel itself once more a qualified and pledged member of the great body of our State in blood and civilization.

The Germans who had gone overseas were scattered over the world in such a way that it was much more difficult to concentrate German interests abroad than was the case with the Anglo-Saxon, Spanish, or even

the French emigrants; moreover our representatives never gave the matter anything but the most perfunctory attention. In many cases they failed to realize that even the most scattered members of a great nation should not abandon their nationality. I will not countenance the malicious saying, that many of our official representatives abroad feel the presence of other Germans to be a nuisance; but I must say of the navy that it was on the average much more zealous in linking up German sentiment and instilling into it pride of the homeland. Wherever there was a German colony we worked to strengthen the national associations across the sea. The most varied occasions were useful for holding Germans together: we passed over all class differences; this was much easier to do in Eastern Asia than anywhere else because there was no serving-class among the Germans there. Divine service brought us together. On the Emperor's birthday everybody who spoke German was invited; all possible kinds of people were to be seen on board ship that day. Out there language and blood have much more binding effect and all frontier lines disappear; the Austrians everywhere reckoned themselves among us, and even the Swiss too. Our merchant shipping, which was formerly only too ready to ingratiate itself with other merchant services, was also made more national by these endeavours on the part of the navy.

I should like to illustrate how the naval officers' corps conceived this service to Germandom by quoting from a letter written to me on my birthday, March,

1914, from South America by the Commander of the *Kaiser*.

". . . At any rate I am more convinced than ever that it is necessary to send the ships abroad, as much for the officers and men, as it is for the ships themselves; if this is not done the navy is bound to become more and more steretoyped—I can find no other expression for it. But bigger things are also at stake. There is so much German blood abroad which must be kept German and reinvigorated. Why should not the time come when this blood should pulsate again? not to form states that might be annexed, but to take effect in the development of the race and to establish natural markets for our mother country, without which we must ultimately stifle at home. Then we can also allow emigration to continue again. The Brazilian does not colonize, he has no labour, and leaves the land idle. The race will not develop there until the country is filled from without. Embassies and consulates, however, don't win back Germandon or quicken German blood, and schools even can only preserve it in cases where the family still feels German. This work can only be done by us, for it needs a strong patriotic voice and a striking symbol which can inspire them with enthusiasm."

And again the same correspondent writes to me in 1915 from the midst of the tragic inactivity of the navy, as follows:

". . . Only the navy can bring to a conclusion the great work of restoring the essential character and nature of the German to their rightful place in the world. The navy is made to carry out into the world the national strength which reposes at home upon

our monarchy and our strong army; it was born for the people out of this idea; I read it in all letters which I still receive now and again from South America; the joy over the growing German spirit and over the concentration of everything that is German even where it seemed already lost. And behind it all is the thought that when peace has come again, our ships shall return to tie inextricably the knot of German sentiment."

In this way that which I had endeavoured to plant in the navy began to take root, and it became more and more effective as a pioneer of Germandom, the less the fleet was compelled to squander all its youthful strength in home waters. When war broke out I saw that the immeasurable prospects of our world power, and consequently our fate at home, depended on our coming out of the war with a strong position against the Anglo-Saxons. Those values abroad which have been destroyed by the fact of the war could only indeed be fully replaced by victory. But even if we succumbed with dignity to superior forces and fell in honour, the German name could preserve its respect in the world. The future of Germany overseas, and our whole artificial and yet so indispensable position in the world, depended upon whether people could remain proud of the fact that they were Germans. Nothing was more fruitful to the commercial prosperity of the Japanese in our time, or of the Germans after 1870, than proved strength and valour.

The world still had room for many Germans who would make their way as such, and not as hired slaves

or deserters to foreign nations, so long as their national honour was too dear for them to sell it. A longer state of peace, or even an end of the war which left us as a whole nation, would have made up for our coming so late on the scene. If we had become a nation, respected as an equal by the rest of the world, of which there was a chance, and if the home country had then become so full of people that we were compelled to send some away, they would have remained German across the seas and would have been an addition instead of a loss of blood.

The bulk of those politicians who directed the Empire's policy at the fateful hour had not been trained to look beyond the range of European diplomacy, and never felt the stir that was going through the still plastic mass of Germandom.

They scarcely understood what was at stake in the war, and how much depended for all of us, but particularly for our workmen, on German prestige being raised and not lowered in all corners of the earth.

IV

It would have been of the greatest value to us if we could have advanced the German language in China—a very difficult task, because it is inferior to English in many respects as a business language. One means by which England has spread her language over the whole world is the sea-chart. England fulfilled a great civilizing task when she surveyed nearly the whole of the ocean. In the last century practically every ship that sailed the sea used English charts;

others were only used within narrow local limits. Our merchant shipping used to sail by English charts, even when German charts were to be had. I proceeded therefore systematically to produce a German series of charts. We already possessed charts of our own waters which were executed with greater thoroughness and exactness than the English, but they had several peculiarities to which our sailors were not accustomed. So I got into touch with our seafaring world, ascertained their likings in all details, even as to the form and the kind of paper, and we succeeded ultimately in producing a series of charts which was not only adequate, but also superior to the English. Then we tried to provide charts for big stretches of ocean running into hundreds of miles; one of them was the voyage from Germany to Eastern Asia. I wanted to do something for the dissemination of our language and the strengthening of Germandom, and this was one of my reasons for beginning this.

Guided by the principle of giving the Chinese the benefits of civilization, we erected a high school in Tsingtao; we also had in mind that it would pay from the economic point of view if we introduced our civilization to them. I was no stranger to the idealist standpoint that it was our duty to disseminate knowledge, but my real motive in all this was to set up for us more sounding-boards in the Far East by this extension of our labours. The high school was provided with a middle school for Chinese as a sort of understructure. We had to get to work quickly, as other-

wise the English would begin to compete with us. On this account we decided swiftly and opened the high school before the middle school could have had time to train the students sufficiently. That was a secondary matter, however; we had to go ahead. It was not the Foreign Office, but Professor Otto Franke, the Chinese expert, who at my instigation conducted the negotiations with the Government at Peking, and he arranged in ideal fashion that Chinese Government Commissaries should co-operate in our examinations. By this means our examinees obtained the right to an appointment in China just as though they had passed a state examination. In this way we should have directed a stream of young people towards China who spoke perfect German, knew our institutions, and were acquainted with our products. We paid particular attention to the science of medicine, which, as it is above all competition, is more qualified than anything else to do national pioneer work for Germany.

Our colony became more and more a depository for the German import-trade. We began to construct a model exhibition of German products, a first-class advertisement which we could never have erected in an English settlement. Standing as we did on the threshold of China, we afforded an insight into our own economic and other achievements, yet we respected the character of the country, accepted and offered hospitality, and returned trust with trust like a "royal merchant."

V

We had everything, except a policy which enabled us to turn this experiment, this trial of Germany's worth, into permanency. I did not see Tsingtao again after 1896, but I built into it so much anxiety and affection that the loss of it moved me almost as much as physical pain. With a garrison of only 3,000 or 4,000 men, the place as we had fortified it could have been held for any time against the Chinese and a long time against the French, the Russians, and even against the English. But even with great expenditure of capital we could not have built a fortress to resist the attack of a Japanese army. There is no cure for the fact that one cannot hold out against the whole world.

The idea of procuring a strong base in Eastern Asia, to which Germans could gravitate, was right in itself; but a necessary condition was that we should be on good terms with Japan. In spite of our protest against the Peace of Shimonoseki in 1895, there was no dangerous shadow between us and Japan, so long as Russia kept us, as it were, in the neutral zone. Even after the collapse of the Russian Eastern policy in 1905, there was no reason for a discerning Japanese policy to wish us out of China. But after 1905 we ought to have done everything in our power to have corrected the mistake of Shimonoseki.[1]

So far as I had any influence in this direction—and

[1] Chapter XIV.

it was not much—I have contsantly worked for a good understanding with Tokio. As far as I knew, the German Government never made any serious attempt to obtain assurances from Japan with regard to the neutralization of Eastern Asia. I was not really surprised by the Japanese ultimatum. But I assumed that Japan must really desire our presence in China on account of her grave opposition to America, which must become acute sooner or later. As Tsingtao had been declared a free port from the beginning according to my own desire, because I thought that we as the owner of the place would never come off worst, Japan did not do a bad business there; the only thing that could make our presence seriously unpleasant to her with all this free trade was her hunger for coal.

The Japanese ultimatum arrived on August 15th, 1914, and its brusque wording is said to have been very similar to that of our Shimonoseki Note of 1895. Upon the advice of our ambassador in Tokio, Count Rex, Bethmann was inclined to accept the ultimatum. I succeeded in preventing the reply from being sent. If we had given up Tsingtao without a fight, we should have lost it in any circumstances; the alliance with Japan, which we should have striven for, was only imaginable, however, if we preserved our honour in Eastern Asia. Even now it will stand us in good stead that we upheld the idea of "the fulfilment of duty to the utmost" right until the enforced end of our Chinese colonial experiment. The unconditional surrender of Tsingtao would have seriously depressed

public feeling in our national struggle for existence. Japan has not done us any more harm as our enemy than the swallowing of the insult would have done us. Besides, in August, 1914, no one could say how long the war would last; at that time indeed the army was full of confidence in victory. We had to take the chance of holding Tsingtao in the event of a speedy end to the war. An attempt to hand over Tsingtao to America, in exchange perhaps for the Philippines, was bound to break down.

We had developed the Boxer line into a solid rampart which only included a few works, with trenches and barbed-wire entanglements, and the sea-front was fortified with a few Krupp cannon which we had taken from the Taku forts for use against insurgents. The last shell was fired when Tsingtao surrendered. When 30,000 of the enemy began the general assault, which there was no artillery to ward off, it was only a question as to whether the remainder of our garrison would allow themselves to be slaughtered in the unfortified town by the attackers. The governor acted correctly in capitulating. In the streets of the captured town the Japanese searched a long time for the 12,000 Germans that they expected to find there. But there were only 2,000, with perhaps 1,500 more conscripts and volunteers who had faithfully found their way thither from the German official and commercial circles in all the settlements in China.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE ADMIRALTY

1. Once more: foreign service fleet or battle fleet? The reason why we needed a battle fleet.—2. Preparation of the first Navy Bill. My method.—3. The reasons for the form of the Bill.

I

When I was recalled from Eastern Asia in the spring of 1897, and was travelling home across America, I was informed by inquisitive American journalists in Salt Lake City that Eugen Richter had already begun a campaign against me in the press as the future Secretary of State. At that time I was not sufficiently versed in parliamentary ways to play off against my inexorable opponent the fact that he attacked me before he knew anything about me. I relinquished my command with a heavy heart, for I had told the Emperor in 1895 that in my opinion the construction of the fleet could only succeed by way of legislation, and that universal experience showed that, to get this through the Reichstag, a "gift of the gab" was needed, which I did not possess, together with a knowledge of political routine which had not been included hitherto in my purely military career. When I arrived in Potsdam in June, 1897, the Emperor told me that everything was ready for the navy campaign;

I only needed to give my consent. During my absence the Emperor had had a draft-bill drawn up by a committee, but in my opinion this was of no use. I have never seen anything constructive done by committees. They are more adapted for criticism. Their sense of responsibility evaporates, and they are not fully alive to the enormous difference between an idea and its materialization. In this instance, however, the Emperor was very much impressed by the work of his committee. I asked for a few days to think it over.

The fundamental idea of this draft centred round *a foreign-service fleet.* Now there were only a few States left in the world at that time, such as Hayti, etc., in which any infringement of our rights could be corrected by foreign-service cruisers without giving rise to a serious conflict. States like the Argentine already had modern warships at their disposal, so that every foreign-service cruiser would have to be supported by a naval force in home waters, if it was to fulfil its purpose as an outpost. Moreover we had not one single foreign base. Throughout my whole career I have always had to oppose two ideas, especially beloved of the lay mind—the idea of a special coastal defence,[1] and that of a cruiser fleet. The world-war has proved that the best *coastal de-*

[1] Even a soldier of the rank of Field-Marshal von der Goltz, when Inspector-General of the Engineering Corps, brought forward plans for the fortification of the coast, and I was given the trouble of rejecting a proposal to dot the coast with armoured towers, which were altogether unnecessary both militarily and politically, owing to the existence of a battle fleet.

fence is a *battle fleet.* As to the cruiser war, I replied to the Emperor at the time somewhat on the following lines: As a thorough-going cruiser war and a war on the high seas against England and other great States is altogether excluded by our lack of foreign bases and by Germany's geographical situation—the foreign Admiralties know this quite well—what we need is a battle fleet which can be stationed between Heligoland and the Thames.

I had just had occasion to see in Eastern Asia the artificial props of our position in the world. I had heard from many sides of the difficulties which the English were putting in the way of everything German, and of the progress of the "made in Germany" boycott, and the anti-German agitation aroused by the Krüger telegram. Germans were being pushed out of the administration of Europeans' settlements, in which they had hitherto taken part, and also out of the English companies and wharves. I had experienced myself how our Eastern Asiatic squadron could be rendered incapable at the slightest provocation by the refusal of the dockyards. In those days, the middle of the 'nineties, one noticed how the world was beginning to go more quickly. German trade, the "Open Door," could no longer be protected by flying squadrons; we had to increase in general power all round, *i.e.* to qualify ourselves for an alliance with the Great Powers. But alliance-value could only be achieved by a battle fleet. One single ally at sea would have sufficed in the Great War to have enabled

us to fight with the most favourable prospects for the freedom of the seas.

The first thing therefore was to create for ourselves a fleet which would give us alliance-value; and the second was a corresponding policy of alliance, and the avoidance of all political friction before this end was achieved. These were the two objects for which we had to strive amid the aggravated conditions of the times. I viewed with anxiety the rash provocations in which German public opinion was indulging against England at that time. I also viewed with anxiety the advice dictated by the recklessness of the Naval Executive Command to the Emperor during the Transvaal crisis. In the same report therefore in which I presented my navy scheme, I asked to be consulted in the use of foreign-service vessels, on account of the political nature of such actions. The Emperor and the Executive Command granted this; but they did not act up to it afterwards. The Emperor agreed immediately to my navy scheme, with a change of mind that surprised me, and in June, 1897, there disappeared finally from the draft scheme that foreign-service fleet, which would certainly have had a short life in the war. I must say that I did not myself regard the prospective battle fleet as a panacea without an alliance with another secondary sea-power; but it was the necessary step towards our qualification for alliance, and consequently, the only tangible way of attaining that independence with regard to England which was unanimously and justly demanded in Ger-

many at that time, but which was unfortunately too often taken for granted in a way which was not compatible with the real-political way of thinking.

II

My predecessor, Hollmann, used to read all the documents relating to his office personally, and he was consequently inundated with the material. I restricted myself to the preparation of the Navy Bill, and left the current business to my deputy. In Ems and St. Blasien, where the bronchitis which I had brought with me from the tropics was to be cured, I gathered round me the men whom I had chosen to work out the Navy Bill with me. The older parliamentary experience of von Capelle, his critical mind, his logical style, were a happy balance to my disposition, which was more given to working by intuition. He was less a fighter than a master of finance; together with Dähnhardt, who carried on urbane intercourse with the Reichstag deputies, he controlled the financial side of affairs, which, in view of the poor state of the revenue, was a tricky art in itself. While I generally went straight for the goal, von Capelle espied the difficulties and objections as well as the different ways of overcoming them; he was always the first to find the weak points to which our opponents could hitch on, but he was not perhaps so good with the *imponderabilia*. He was just as indispensable to me for the parliamentary side of the work as the fiery von Heeringen was for arousing the people; von

Heeringen conducted the mental mobilization of the masses in a very tactful way.

My method of work always had Nelson's "We are a band of brothers" for its motto. Ever since my first commands, I have had to deal with things which needed to be regarded in perspective from many sides, and the man who does not feel like Napoleon, able to leave his personal stamp upon everything, is bound to make for himself a bundle of faggots which is more difficult to break than a single twig. If one is faced with a big piece of work, one must avoid trying to do everything oneself. I had noticed with Caprivi that he did too much of his own writing; once he had written something in his fine, even handwriting, it was difficult to make him change it; he was, so to speak, in love with his own thoughts. I have also noticed this danger in myself; I therefore kept myself in check all the more, so that I could face more dispassionately that which was right in itself.

One of the reasons with which it has been attempted to justify the breaking-up of the homogeneous—so to speak, sovereign—Admiralty, and its partition into different departments, was the assertion that the whole management of the navy was too much for one man. This assertion, which was at the back of the mistaken Imperial Command, thus put the reins into the hands of a monarch who was supposed to govern much more than the navy! But it is wrong to say that it would be difficult to set up a many-sided authority. The main thing is that one should have a sense for every-

thing essential, and put all the rest upon reliable assistants. At all costs one must secure the assistants that one has chosen for oneself. I left time for what was essential, and should have liked to do much more.

There is nothing I have been so careful to avoid in organizing as taking a fundamentally false step. For, once a wrong course is taken, it is difficult to discover the original mistake; only the symptoms are evident, and precedent and interests are soon established on the mistake. Therefore, one should never lay organizations on the table of the House, but they should be allowed to crystallize round a given point. One must also leave open the possibility of dissolving the organization without any disturbance if any mistakes appear, for in general one only recognizes the advantages in radical changes beforehand, and seldom the disadvantages. In organization, formal logic is of less account than the goodness of the soil and of the seed. We therefore did not drive the Navy Bill tautly, but as slackly as possible.

Personal attendance in the Reichstag, in fact appearance in public at all, was not congenial to me. I felt that the less one spoke in the Reichstag, the better it was and the further one got, especially in a province so delicate as mine. I believe that I have never given any occasion of offence to any opponent either at home or abroad in this way. A certain shyness of the bustle of public life may have influenced me. It is true that the reproach was raised later against me,

that the naval debates, both in full session and in committee, were either too "tedious" or too "glib," and that this was probably due to some secret arrangement behind the scenes. We certainly did have confidential talks with the party leaders. But our chief secret was the absolutely meticulous elaboration of every Bill, so that it convinced everybody and was unassailable. The success of this was due to the working methods which I had formed during my labours in the 'seventies, by which I first gave the idea, then consulted as many other people as I could, and then once more made an exhaustive examination of the final result. Capelle, as a rule, first wrote down the matters deliberated by us. Later on, the practical test of our technical and organizing work, quite apart from the careful elaboration of the Navy Bills, gave Parliament more and more confidence in us as time went on. Any other means than our thorough methods of work would never have won for us our successes in Parliament.

In the Prusso-German governmental system of my day the Ministers of State generally preferred to exhaust themselves with silent, often unrewarded, departmental work, rather than parade themselves in the public eye. The straitjacket of parliamentarism, which has been put on the German people by international theorists, who have no understanding of organic growth, and no regard for the judgment of history, will soon teach them to praise the old times as the good times. The new rulers will wonder at the ex-

pertness of the old Government, and at the amount of loyal work achieved instead of empty talk.

Every word of the draft Bill was altered probably a dozen times in our discussions at St. Blasien. I used to "revolve" the matter, an expression about which I was often teased. I always insisted upon the principle of giving each collaborator the greatest possible independence. I used to urge my departmental heads never to regard questions from their sectional standpoints, alone; each of them was to criticize ruthlessly, just as though he were the king and had to decide it all alone. There is always enough of the detail work to do. Thus I demanded of the engineer that he should learn to judge from the military standpoint as well as from his own, and *vice versa* from the officer. There is nothing that I consider more unwise than to stress the superior officer in discussion. There always comes a point when one person must decide; but I may say that it rarely came to the point of a command at the Admiralty; we almost always came to a mutual decision, in the course of which I as *primus inter pares* spared my collaborators the feeling of being beaten by a majority of votes, and left them the joy of their achievement, but at the same time I myself did better and more than if I had wanted to see myself in everything. The transference of the brusque word of command (which is necessary in face of the enemy) from the ship to the office and to big undertakings, the working with mere creatures who obey mechanically, the painful delimitation of departmental

views, cripple the sense of responsibility and the capacity for making decisions, which are the chief requirements in military authorities. When one knows oneself what one is out after, then one can get the best out of one's subordinates, and in modern organizations one can refrain from personally dragging the whole burden forward a few feet, and instead one can help all one's assistants to advance their own part of it an inch or two.

The field of my activities accustomed me to great versatility. The more complex an organization becomes, so much the more does the head take on differentiated functions, and if it is to keep itself clear it must not try to take on any of the work of the members. I gathered round me specialists, who had on the whole a good store of knowledge, and I gave my attention to the inter-connection, so that if necessary their different specialties could be brought to the fore. I always furthered the promotion of independent characters, but the longer my experience, the more definite was my peculiar discovery how scarce really creative minds are, and how characters which have proved themselves in secondary positions can fail completely in higher ones. In advancements one can hardly protect oneself from making a bad captain out of a good lieutenant.

III

I was assured at the Admiralty that we should never get the Bill passed as it was. Our most reliable friend

in Parliament, the National-Liberal leader, von Bennigsen, was also of the same opinion, and he advised us to try yearly credits. I insisted upon this Bill, however, quite resolved to attempt what was said to be improbable, and to resign in the event of failure.

I needed a Bill which would protect the continuity of the construction of the fleet on different flanks. The circumstance that was most in the Bill's favour was that it intended to make the Reichstag abandon the temptation to interfere each year afresh in technical details, as they had hitherto done when every ship had become the "exercise for debates"; and the Admiralty had not demanded what was most important in reality, but that which they could get passed in the interplay of changing majorities. But with party coalitions which treated ships as objects of compensation, it was impossible to construct such a naval armament as was demanded by a generation of patient, uniform growth.

I could never discover, however, how to ward off the frequent interference of the *Emperor,* whose imagination, once it had fixed upon shipbuilding, was fed by all manner of impressions. Suggestions and proposals are cheap in the navy, and change like a kaleidoscope; if the Emperor had spoken with some senior lieutenant or had seen something abroad, he was full of new demands, constructing, reproaching me with backwardness and even thinking to rouse me by means of warnings. Apart from several threats to resign, I could only secure the continuity of development, which

was the fundamental factor of success, by means of legislation. The third side from which chaos threatened and against which I needed a law was *the navy itself*. Whenever it is a question of special knowledge, opinions diverge. When I became Secretary of State, the German navy was a collection of experiments in shipbuilding, although not so varied as the Russian fleet under Nicholas II. Even the English navy is the same to a certain degree, but there money is of no importance; if they had built a class of ships wrongly, they just threw the whole lot into the corner and built another. But we could not permit ourselves that. Besides, in England they understood better that opinions change, whilst the doctrinaire German immediately declared that as he had built something wrong, *anathema sit*. The German more readily believes in a system if it is put before him as such. I was quite aware of the minor defects of the Bill, but I had no choice if we were going to make any progress under the present conditions.

The form of the Bill had the very great additional advantage that it enabled us to proceed in a more business-like fashion and arrange matters economically in many ways, since we were able to look a long way ahead. And economy, which entailed a great deal of previous calculation, was a bitter necessity for Germany's armaments.

At the beginning of 1897 I had a conversation with von Miquel, then Minister of Finance, mainly for the purpose of discussing the general political side of the

Navy Bill with him, and he gave me a few general assurances of support. An article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 5th) came as a great surprise to me, therefore when inspired as it was by Miquel, it made out that the Bill, which was desirable in itself, was not feasible at the present time. Progressive development was required in the navy, but it had to be achieved without infringing the parliamentary rights of the Reichstag.

This publication was undoubtedly inadmissible, and dangerous to the Bill. But I avoided an open conflict. Miquel was against the Bill, as was indeed the whole Ministry, but he did not want to put up any open opposition to it on account of the Emperor; he was trying, therefore, to appease me, and yet to dissuade me from my plan by representing its difficulties. When he saw, however, that I was determined to stand firm, he became more friendly.

The general scepticism among the leaders and the indifference of the mass of the people made me think of canvassing for Bismarck's support.

CHAPTER X

WITH BISMARCK

1. The launching of the *Fürst Bismarck*. My first visit to Friedrichsruh. A fatal beginning. Bismarck on the balance of power at sea.—2. Drive through the Sachsenwald.—3. The last visit to Friedrichsruh.

I

In June, 1897, I had suggested to the Emperor that the next ship to leave the stocks should be given the name *Fürst Bismarck*. I knew that Prince Bismarck or his family cherished the wholly erroneous suspicion that a ship bearing his name had been intentionally struck off the list at the time of his resignation. By this means I hoped to soften the estrangement between Bismarck and the Government, and I wanted to take the invitation personally to Friedrichsruh in the autumn, and to seize the opportunity to obtain the old Prince's blessing for the Navy Bill.

The Emperor agreed after some hesitation, but later sent an official letter on his own account to Bismarck inviting him to the launching of a ship, without, however, giving the name with which it was to be christened. He anticipated by this act of grace, as he generally did, the pleasure which such occasions always gave him, and intended to give the Prince a surprise. Bismarck's reply was to the effect that he was too old for

such things. Then I received the command to straighten up the situation, which had got into a pretty muddle.

I wrote to the Prince requesting an audience of him, in order to report on the intended procedure on the part of the navy. The letter came back unopened, with a note to the effect that the Prince did not receive any letters which did not contain the sender's name plainly written on the envelope. In reply to a second letter I was told that I could come.

It was the custom to arrive at Friedrichsruh about midday. I was met by Count Rantzau, whom I knew personally; I begged for his support. When I entered the house the family was already at table, the Prince sitting at the end. He got up, cold but polite, very much the *grand seigneur,* and remained standing until I had taken my seat. He was tormented by violent neuralgic pains, and kept holding india-rubber hot-water bottles to his cheek; he ate scraped meat, and could only speak with difficulty. After a bottle and a half of champagne he became more lively. When the simple lunch was finished, the Countess Wilhelm Bismarck lit his long pipe for him, and the ladies left the room. The atmosphere was sultry. Suddenly the great eyebrows contracted, he gave me an annihilating look and growled, "I am no tom-cat that gives off sparks when it is stroked." I am not generally very ready, but I could not remain silent in the face of these almost desperate prospects, and so I replied, "So far as I know, those are only black cats,

your Highness." Count Rantzau put in eagerly, "The Admiral is right, only black cats do that." The atmosphere became less electric. I delivered my message, and he answered that he could not come to Kiel and put on his uniform and spurs, and that he did not wish to appear before the public as a ruin. In order to get something positive out of him, I suggested that perhaps one of his daughters-in-law could appear at the launching ceremony. He replied that I must ask them; he left it as a matter of form to their personal decision. Thereupon I brought out my chief reason for coming.

I set forth my plans and endeavoured to persuade the Prince that this was no mere whim on the part of the Monarch, although I had had many such to deal with in the course of recent years; and impressed upon him that it was our intention to carry out the Naval Programme approved by the Reichstag in 1867, but recast and brought up to date. We must have, I said, a certain measure of political sea-power in view of the new times that were coming. This had not been so necessary in the 'seventies because the immeasurable fame and brilliance of great names had helped us over any difficulties in those days. Now, on the other hand, a foundation of real power was necessary, for example, in view of our position in an Anglo-Russian war, which had to be seriously reckoned with. In conclusion, I added that I had come to obtain his blessing for the creation of a definite naval power which corresponded to our tactical experiences.

From Bismarck's first few words it was evident that he did not want to hear anything of the military side of the matter. He had no high opinion of big ships, he said, and he agreed with his friend Roon that a large number of little ships were needed which could swarm like hornets round the big ships. I did not succeed very well in making him see that the heavy ship represented a concentration of force and had the advantage in certain positions; he objected that this would be already for a ranged battle, but he stuck to his "hornets," and wanted to push on the service abroad by the aid of a number of small ships which could be sent all over the world. My admission that this would be important if we would get a few bases abroad, led to an outburst against Caprivi. He said that apart from his old friend Roon, who represented a department of the Naval Ministry up till 1871, he had never agreed with any of the Naval Secretaries. Caprivi, he continued, had always come to him in the Wilhelmstrasse, like a wooden ramrod; and what else could one have expected from him? While he, Caprivi, was a lieutenant in Berlin without extra pay for twenty-two years he had seen the well-to-do cavalry officers, whose fathers had landed estates; and when he became Imperial Chancellor he thought he could rub this into the landed proprietors. Moreover, the dissolution of the Insurance Treaty with Russia was the most terrible disaster. In the event of an Anglo-Russian conflict, Bismarck declared, our political position was summed up in the phrase "Neu-

trality towards Russia"; Russia wanted this, and it was sufficient for him too.

The possibilities suggested by me that a new Pitt might not desire such a neutrality, and might prefer our hostility, and further that other constellations were just as conceivable, and that only a respectable naval force could qualify us for an alliance with Russia and other Powers, were thrust aside by Bismarck almost angrily. He said that taken as individuals the English were quite worthy people, but they were shopkeepers in politics. If they came, we should slay them with the butt ends of our rifles. He was totally incapable of understanding that a close blockade would overcome us.

The old Prince was obviously thinking of the agrarian Germany of 1870, and the political England of 1864; and he no longer understood the powerful position of the British world-empire in 1897. Altogether, he was following his own preconceived ideas rather than giving himself the trouble to take in a new scheme. In the main, however, he agreed with me: "There is no need for you to persuade me that we need a bigger navy." He confirmed his approval of my procedure in writing later.

The memoranda of the former French ambassador in Berlin, Baron de Courcel, show how responsive the Prince was, in his best days, to the idea that we ought to possess a certain definite value as an ally against England. When the colonial aspirations of Germany and France seemed to converge in 1884, the Prince

sketched to the Ambassador the possibility of a naval covenant between the two continental neighbours. The Prince is said to have expressed himself as follows on that occasion[1]:

"What I am aiming at is the 'restoration of a certain balance of power at sea,' and France has a great part to play in this matter if she is ready to enter into our views. There was a great deal said at one time about the European balance of power, but this belongs to the eighteenth century. I do not believe, however, that it would be too old-fashioned to speak of 'a balance of power at sea.' I do not want a war against England, but I should like to make her realize that the navies of the other nations can establish a counterpoise to her at sea, and compel her to take other people's interests into account if they combine. But England has got to accustom herself to the idea that an alliance between Germany and France is not outside the bounds of possibility."

Bismarck himself would probably have been the only man who could have brought about a reconciliation with France. As this reconciliation, however, was not effected, the ageing man became alienated from these views. He no longer felt how strongly this diplomatic dependence on Russia, which he demanded (and the necessity of which was quite clear even to me), required as a foundation, in view of the altered international situation, a naval "balance of power" policy and the power of offering an alliance at sea. Owing to the British hostility towards us which had

[1] *Neue Preussische* (*Kreuz-*) *Zeitung,* August 20th, 1918.

revealed itself unsparingly since 1896, the question of power was now: How could we, huddled together as we were on our over-populated soil, preserve peace with England without capitulating to her trade-jealousy, or, if England resolved to bottle us up, how could we survive a war with her? Neither of these problems could be solved by our being without a fleet, or by our having a foreign-service fleet, but solely by means of a battle fleet, the military potentiality and alliance-value of which must make it difficult for the English to pick a quarrel with us. "A new epoch had begun," as the old Prince said at his last glimpse of Hamburg harbour, when, overwhelmed by the enormous activity which had developed there since the post-Bismarckian era, he thought of the easy-going old Hamburg of the days when it was controlled by the English.

II

After we had been sitting about two hours at table, he asked me to go for a drive with him through the Sachsenwald. He never rested in the afternoon. There were big bottles of beer right and left of us in the carriage, which were opened and drunk; it was not easy to keep pace with his powerful constitution. So that he could speak freely in the presence of the coachman, the Prince used a foreign language, and as his nature combined delicacy with forcefulness, he chose the English language, which he assumed would be most familiar to me as a sailor, and which he

himself spoke excellently. He was unsparing in his criticism of the Emperor, but did not mind my objecting to his strong expressions, because as an officer I had to take the Emperor's side. He told me how the Empress Augusta had worked in 1848 for the abdication of the King, and the renunciation of the right of succession by the Prince of Prussia; how as leader of the Right in the Chamber he had replied to the deputy von Vincke, who proposed—at the instigation of the Princess—a Regency of the Princess Augusta for Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, that, if such a motion was introduced, he would formally propose that the mover should be arrested; how the Princess then interviewed him once more in Potsdam, violently slapping her thighs meanwhile, and declared that she was only concerned for the interests of her son, and how the latter, who was waiting in an alcove in the corridor, came up to him weeping, with outstretched hands. He spoke with affection about the Emperor Frederick, who had always supported the Chancellor, even during his illness and in spite of the Empress Victoria. He would like me to tell the Emperor that he only wanted "to be let alone" and to die in peace. His work was done, and there was no more future and no more hope for him.

We drove for two hours without a covering in spite of showers from time to time; the Prince smoked his pipe. He talked about his earlier passion for hunting; how he could once go a hundred miles to shoot one stag, and how, now that he was a broken man, he

still liked to see the game although he could not longer bring himself to put a hole into the shining coat of the beautiful animal. He talked about his dead wife, who had been his support in life; tears came into his eyes; the way in which he described his condition was very moving. He also talked of his English relationships, and how he had generally liked the sailors, but not the admirals. . . .

I took care to show him the honours due to royalty; one felt that one could not do otherwise. When I got out I stood at the salute; a small crowd had collected in front of the house. We went in to supper and again I sat next to Bismarck. Here I must relate an incident which showed his tactfulness. I should have liked very much to ask him for a photograph with his signature, but I knew how unpleasant it was to be pressed for such a thing; and when I accompanied Prince Henry in Italy I had been disgusted at the struggles which had taken place on both sides to secure decorations and photographs. On the other hand I was sorry that I had not ventured to ask the old Moltke for a souvenir when I was showing him over the torpedo section in Kiel, in Stosch's time, and had had occasion to feel the ascendancy of his great fine spirit. Bismarck now spared me making the request by professing to remember my old father when in the top form of the Grey Friars School, and handed me his own portrait for my old father, who was still living then.

III

I visited the old gentleman twice after this; the last time when in the suite of the Emperor, who announced himself with the whole company rather suddenly in Friedrichsruh, after the ceremonial departure of Prince Henry for Tsingtao. Bismarck received the Emperor in his wheeled-chair at the modest entrance to his country house. We went straight to table. Bismarck seated himself with some assistance, but after he had been sitting down some time he livened up again. My place was diagonally opposite the Prince, who was sitting next to the Emperor, and I had at my side von Moltke, the future general. The Prince tried to begin a political conversation on our relations with France, etc. To my great regret the Emperor did not follow up these openings, but carried on the anecdotal conversation which is so usual at the Imperial table. Whenever Bismarck began on politics the Emperor ignored it. Moltke whispered to me, "It is terrible"; we felt the lack of reverence for such a man. Then in some connection or other Bismarck said a few words, the prophetic weight of which impressed them deeply upon us: "Your Majesty, as long as you have this officers' corps, you can do everything you want; when this is no longer the case, matters will be quite different." The apparent nonchalance with which this came out, as if there were nothing in it at all, showed an extraordinary presence of mind; it revealed the master.

When we broke up, the Prince in his wheeled-chair

accompanied the Emperor as far as the door, and then we bade each other farewell. Bismarck parted in a friendly way from Bülow, Miquel, and others. Before me there was the Cabinet-chief, von Lucanus, who had had a share in Bismarck's dismissal in 1890. He offered his hand to the Prince and was on the point of bowing. Then a remarkable scene took place which produced a powerful effect. The Prince sat there like a statue, without moving a muscle; he gazed into space, with Lucanus fidgeting in front of him. The Prince's features were expressionless; there was no dislike there; his face was an immovable mask, until Lucanus understood and withdrew. Then came myself, and after me my faithful Captain von Heeringen, who was so carried away (he was a man of temperament) that he bent and kissed Bismarck's hand. I was glad of it: I had also tried to make the Prince feel as much as I could, but the action of Herr von Heeringen was stronger. Then the Prince took Heeringen's head between his hands, and kissed him on the brow.

This is my last memory of Bismarck.

CHAPTER XI

THE NAVY BILLS

1. Instruction of the people in naval affairs.—2. The first Navy Bill before the Reichstag.—3. The necessity for a second Navy Bill.—4. Unintentionally speedy progress. The fundamental ideas of naval construction.—5. The second Navy Bill before the Reichstag.

I

From now on the Bismarck press supported me. Further, I had personally asked all Princes of the Empire, including the Grand Dukes, for their support, and had sought to make them feel that they had a share in the decision by reporting to them on the subject. This succeeded particularly in the case of a Prince like King Albert of Saxony, who was a man of considerable business knowledge and who gave his serious attention to the matter; or like the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, whose own achievements had been of such great service to our naval interests; or like the Grand Duke Frederick of Baden, a man provided with all the qualities of an old-time ruler, whose personality was far above the average, which in my opinion has fallen throughout the whole of Germany during the last generation, both in the royal houses and among the leaders of the various professions. Of course I also paid attention to the Hanseatic towns; and further, to the Minister of the Federal States, my getting to

know whom proved to be a good means of propaganda, particularly as this practice of touring the country was not usual at that time.

Then I considered it my privilege and my duty to bring home to the broader masses of the people the interests that were here at stake. It was a question of widening the limited horizon of the people, of awakening a sense of the civilizing influences bounds up with the sea, that had suffered or had been pushed on one side by our historical development; of deepening the conviction that this was the way imperatively assigned to us if, instead of resorting to emigration on a large scale, we wanted to maintain at home the crowded masses of Germans in that state of prosperity which they had enjoyed since Bismarck's tariff legislation. Heeringen organized the information department of the Admiralty. He went the round of the universities, where almost all the political economists, including Brentano, were ready to give splendid support. Schmoller, Wagner, Sering, Schumacher, and many others showed that the expenditure on the fleet would be a productive outlay, and illustrated Germany's position, the insecure politico-economic foundation of our whole civilization and power, and the danger that our superfluous population might become an intolerable burden instead of a source of wealth. They showed how our position in the world was built upon sand, and how Chamberlain's tariff reform schemes would condemn us to vegetate as a small nation, unless we had the power to throw a word in our own favour

into the scales against the Powers overseas. Thus the discussion of national-political questions received an impetus which formed a healthy counterpoise to social-political Utopias.

There were none of the great historians left, who had guided public opinion in an earlier generation, after the death of Treitschke, that glorious man, whose lectures I had attended at the University after 1876, and who had also given me private advice as I sat at his side in Josty's, scribbling my questions on a tablet. I cannot understand why the spirit of Treitschke has disappeared from the teaching of German history. Without a sea-power to protect our industry, we should have ceased to be a European Great Power, and the argument that we were satisfied, which seemed to be indicated by the world-removed attitude of many savants, could only hold good in the question of German unity. After this question had been solved, however, the other, as to whether we were to mean anything at all to the human race, came to the front with all its force. Perhaps it was the novelty and the speedy development of this political problem that prevented the majority of historians from realizing it as clearly as the political economists.[1]

[1] Among the historians I received particular support from Dietrich Schaeffer. Mommsen was still alive and he was quite ready to give me ships, but not a Bill. In conversation with him I told him that his account of the second Punic War seemed to me to fail to realize that Hannibal was conquered by the Roman mastery of the sea. In the same way, the Seven Years War and the Napoleonic Era are generally interpreted in a far too one-sided fashion in Germany. If the traditional teaching of history in Germany had only accustomed us to think more

The army, with its continental traditions also, did not willingly keep up with the changes in the international situation. I soon had an illustration of this in the bungling preparations for the miserable China Expedition, in the execution of which the deficient *matériel* and defective mental qualifications of the army administration for tasks which were not connected with the "two-front" war, were only prevented from obtruding themselves upon public notice by the *savoir faire* of Count Waldersee. But I met with sympathy among prominent soldiers, such as Field-Marshal von der Goltz, with whom I used to speak just as I did with the savants, although laying much more stress on the politico-military point of view. We caused meetings and lectures to be held, and made special efforts to get into touch with the press on a large scale. We received every newspaper impartially, and gave them all positive information without indulging in polemics. They could do with it just what they liked; a certain gratitude for the material we had given them was always evident, and thus we progressed.

The traditional hospitality of the navy indicated

in terms of continents, Bethmann-Hollweg, the head-boy of Schulpforta, might have better understood the point on which the whole of the world-war turned. One very melancholy sign of the narrowness of our historical horizon to my mind was the slight regard that was paid to the books of A. v. Peez. I had them distributed in hundreds and also caused Admiral Mahan's work to be translated, in the well-founded hope that the rising generation of our naval officers would contribute by its education to the necessary expansion of the nation's historico-political horizon.

the way in which the public was to be handled. We did not want to put railings round ourselves, but wanted to have the fleet as a thing belonging to the German people. We instituted tours to the water-side and exhibited the ships and the wharves; we applied to the schools, and we called upon novelists to write for us: stacks of novels and pamphlets were the result. Prizes were to be given by the Ministry of Education to the schools. The Government, without whose consent a subordinate department like the Admiralty could not undertake anything at all, supported us under Bülow. But the propaganda would have been still more effective if the Ministry had taken it over. We were still outsiders. In Prussia, for example, we had no right to use the machinery of state; moreover, no budget grant could be reckoned on for the purpose of such propaganda. I was able, however, to carry out the whole of the campaign, so to speak, without cost to the State, by means of voluntary contributions. This also was a new procedure in Germany: the decisive thing was that the idea caught on; then the spark went farther afield of its own accord.

There revealed itself a certain need on the part of the nation for a goal, for a patriotic catch-word which would bring them all together. The nation was not yet satisfied. When a nation is satisfied it goes back. Inaction and decline are very much akin. This was not the case with us, and in a short time the fleet was recognized to be a vital question, a self-evident possession of the nation. To be sure, the politically

naïve German suddenly thought in many cases that he was already *in possession* of a mighty fleet, while it was still a question of building the fleet. Exaggerations and incorrect comparisons with England, provocative statements and tactlessness in the press, parliament, and the public generally, were not wholly to be suppressed in spite of the warnings I issued.

The fact that the people were beginning to have an affection for the sea was a distinct advance. The German only sins in exuberance of national feeling, because he wavers, an incorrigible political illusionist, between the two extremes, the fear of power and the intoxication of power.[1]

II

On September 15th, 1897, I reported to the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, for the first time on the Navy Bill. I made it especially clear that a postponement was not advisable; there would be Reichstag elections next year; so that if the Bill was rejected, a dissolution could be avoided, and the navy question would not make at all an unfavourable elec-

[1] The Admiralty did its best to give the public a sober estimate of its work. We also included information about foreign navies in the monthly periodical *Marinerundschau*, and in *Nauticus*, which we published annually as a kind of private handbook, as a means of expressing our opinion on naval matters and the practical issues more freely and without official weight. The sale of *Nauticus* rose from year to year. From the very outset it was of great assistance to us against the anti-navy pamphlets of Eugen Richter and others; and when we were celebrating the acceptance of the first Navy Bill with various Reichstag deputies at my house we laughingly toasted the great anonymous journalist, "Herr Nauticus."

tion issue. With its party funds exhausted by the elections the next Reichstag would be unwilling to face dissolution. The Ministry gave its consent on October 6th. The publication of the Bill took place early one Sunday morning, so that it had thirty-six hours in which to make an impression before Eugen Richter, who had been very unfriendly towards it, could write against it in Monday evening's press.

The opponents of a big navy in the Reichstag, and others besides, were offering resistance to the gagging of the Reichstag's right of sanction by this permanent grant. For a precedent, Eugen Richter pointed to the fate of the naval programme in 1865, which was rejected in spite of the warm feeling in the navy's favour because of its important and intimate connection with the Constitution question. But more dangerous than the implacability of Richter was the fact that even those circles which acknowledged in substance the essential and well-founded nature of our demands, considered a formal sanction by act of parliament as out of the question, try as I might to obtain it. In this matter my arguments were received with a doubtful shrug of the shoulders even by my best friends. Now, I was concerned above all with the principle of the Bill, as I have indicated above. I pointed out that the fourteen armoured vessels which had been acknowledged to be necessary in 1873 were not all sanctioned and built until twenty-one years afterwards; only a formal Act could guarantee the ships being built within a specified time, and it alone

could pull the navy out of the confusion, weakness, and critical condition generally into which it had been thrown by its indifferent treatment by the Reichstag.

In order to establish this principle, *i.e.* that of a formal Act, I confined myself in substance to the absolutely essential. We asked for new taxes or subsidies, we voluntarily restricted our financial requirements to the minimum, binding ourselves to a period of seven (six if need be) years. For the present we only asked for a small "raiding fleet"—anything more than which was out of the question at that time as the technical preparations for building ships on a large scale had yet to be made. We therefore made it appear that by this first step we were not effecting anything more than Stosch's scheme for the foundation of a fleet. The whole procedure was not to appear as a break with the past. The coast-defence idea was mentioned, partly for the sake of its historical connection and partly to prevent ourselves being charged with offensive intentions. There was also the armoured coastal squadron, and this was simply included in the Bill. As provision was made at the same time for replacing these coast-defence vessels at a later date, but as nothing definite was said as to the class of substitute, this inclusion of the old types did not stand in the way of desirable development later.[1]

[1] In the second Navy Bill we rechristened the armoured coast-defence vessels which we possessed with the name "ships of the line," which cost nothing at all, but which definitely established the fact that the ships destined by the Act to replace

It was hoped to get the Bill through the Reichstag in consideration of its being firmly founded on long years of work, so that the scheme presented itself as a reasoned demand, which had not been born in a moment, but had evolved out of experience.

On Capelle's advice, I included a financial limit in the first Navy Bill. As the raising of money offered no difficulties—for, as I have already said, the necessary means were at hand without taxation, this financial limit made the Bill more palatable to the Reichstag; but it created difficulties for us afterwards in the administration of the Bill, because the value of money depreciated steadily.

In order to get into touch with influential Reichstag deputies, I arranged for interviews with my collaborators, and I myself joined in these discussions when I had myself sensed the general trend of feeling. It was impossible to approach Eugen Richter. But a section of the Progessives ranged themselves on our side. The National Liberals were our best friends. I did not need to trouble myself about the Conservatives, who were only lukewarm at first, as with the exception of free-lances they always voted on principle for military Bills, ever mindful as they were of the thorny past and threatened present of Prussian Germany. The balance in the scale was the Centrum.

this class were to be included in the High Sea fleet. The service afloat did not understand the real reason for the inclusion of these old vessels in the fleet as constituted by the Act, and thus this obsolescent class of vessel was given the name of "floating coffins."

Like the majority of politicians, Freiherr v. Hertling, who was a friend of our cause, doubted the possibility of our obtaining parliamentary sanction. He said that the previous lack of uniformity in the treatment of all naval questions had made it too easy for our opponents to arouse feeling against naval schemes; in addition, there were rumours of a *coup d' état.*

Our conversations with Dr. Lieber, the leader of the Centrum, who in spite of his personal sensitiveness proved in practice to be very amenable, finally secured the success of the Bill. The alteration of the time limit from seven years to six was made at the suggestion of Lieber himself.

Thus the leap was accomplished which was first necessary to establish our sea-power in legislation. The Reichstag renounced a portion of its right to interpose every year in the development of the navy. The national view-point superseded that of the parliamentary routine. We were ultimately able to convince the Reichstag, because we were ourselves convinced.

III

In the winter of 1898-9 I was still firmly resolved to keep to the six years' limit. It was, however, always quite clear to me, and I also expressed myself to this effect in the Reichstag, that the first Navy Bill would not create the fleet in its ultimate form. It was frankly stated that we would have to bring forward supplementary demands after the conclusion of the six years' limit.

After the nation had confirmed *on principle* in 1897 the right of existence of a strong fleet, but had imposed strict limitations upon its *matériel,* the time approached when we had to decide whether the political step towards real sea-power was to be ventured upon or whether the whole enterprise was to remain a systematic demonstration. Personally I was determined to proceed from the first step to the second, paying attention meanwhile to the political situation at home and abroad. I had in mind the idea of proceeding " in spurts," nursing the Reichstag as much as possible meanwhile. This nursing, however, proved to be very difficult; for after we had begun to build seriously, people's expectations exceeded the limits of possibility. Thus, I found myself relieved of the necessity of raising the financial limit much sooner than I had ever surmised, only to begin the preparation of a second Navy Bill.

Since the autumn of 1898 I had resolved to adopt the principle of arranging all the details of organization so that they would be adaptable to the future increase of the fleet. Since our measures were directed towards a distant goal, they were often misunderstood within the navy, and led to internal friction, which had to be patiently endured so as not to endanger the general scheme.

In the course of the summer of 1899, we realized that the supplementary estimates could not wait until the conclusion of the six years' limit (1904), and we decided to bring them in at the latest in 1901 or

1902, but to arrange the annual estimates for 1900 in such a manner as to open the way for the supplementary Bill and to announce at the same time that we intended to anticipate the latter by some years. The actual decision as to the contents and date of the supplementary Bill would not then take place until the spring of 1900, after all the details of the draft had been thoroughly elaborated, and the prevailing political conditions had been taken into consideration. I requested and received on September 28th, 1899, the Imperial consent to such a procedure. The Chief of the Naval Cabinet, who was present during the reading of my report to the Emperor, regarded as doubtful the prospects of the Bill in the Reichstag, whereupon the Emperor opined that the iron pitcher (the desire for a navy) would break the earthen one (the Opposition).

I was prompted to this decision by three reasons. The first was of a parliamentary nature. We could not manage with the financial limit fixed in 1898, for we had underestimated the increase in the price of ships. If the building of the new ships which were to be ordered was not to suffer from shortage of money, we would have to approach the Reichstag in 1900 or 1901 at the latest, but better still at once, with the request that we should be released from the money limit. If we did this, however, then it would be impossible to avoid further inquiries in the Reichstag as to our shipbuilding plans after the conclusion of the six years' limit. If we had then announced the

supplementary Bill for 1904, we should have had a general debate in 1899 to no practical advantage. Thus, it was better to establish from the outset a positive object for this unavoidable parliamentary discussion, and to give the debate the character of a first reading.

The second, and still more important, reason in favour of the speeding-up of the supplementary Bill was of a technical and administrative nature. We had to try to build *as many ships as possible* every year; our military object and the means at our disposal suggested three big ships a year as our rate of construction. The best thing would have been a straightforward Bill providing for the annual construction of three ships, but the Reichstag would never have agreed to such an abandonment of its right of sanction. It only agreed to bind itself by the first Navy Bill in so far as the latter was based upon the necessities of *organization*—that is to say, by that organic navy scheme which contained, not single ships, but the *squadron formation,* which had been tested by us as a tactical unit and imitated by the whole world. If we made our demands in terms of squadrons, the Reichstag could cancel squadrons but not ships, because in the latter case it would have exceeded its authority and have interfered in matters of military organization. This squadron formation, which was recognized by the Reichstag, together with the average life of a ship, resulted in a rate of construction which changed from year to year. According to the first Navy Bill the

rate of construction of three ships per year would continue until 1901; then we should have reduced it to one ship, and have risen again later to the three-ship rate—even exceeding it from time to time.

The Reichstag would scarcely have taken amiss the reduction to one ship, but it certainly would not have liked the spasmodic increases in the estimates when the rate rose again. Considerable creaking in the parliamentary machine was to be feared, like the complaints that I had in 1912. We should avoid this fluctuation in the rate of construction, however, if we presented a new Navy Bill so opportunely that the maintenance of the three-ship rate followed of its own accord.

The third, and most important, reason why the Foreign Office of those days under Bülow, and I personally, did not want to delay the new Navy Bill for some years was the altered international situation. Violence had been done to a few of our ships in Samoa by English and Americans. This humiliation, combined with the unfortunate Manila affair, had strengthened the feeling in favour of a more effective sea-power among the German public. Other signs of the times were the subjection of the French at Fashoda to the will of the mistress of the seas, England, and the war of the Spaniards against America, which was lost at sea and deprived Spain of her colonies. Finally, the Boer War was casting its shadow ahead. Enormously increased naval shipbuilding programmes on the part of nearly all the

naval Powers pointed to a speeding-up in the world's development, which we had not been in a position to anticipate in 1897. Even in home politics things were developing. The dispute over the Central Canal seemed to be a prelude to the collision between the economic groups, which threatened in 1902 on the occasion of the revision of the commercial treaties, and if the navy question had become mixed up with this it would have run the risk of not being treated on its merits.

At the end of September, 1899, therefore, I was prepared, with the Emperor's consent, to include as many troublesome demands as possible in the estimates of 1900, to get in touch with the Reichstag deputies during the winter months of 1899-1900, and to draw up the form and contents of a new supplementary Bill in the Admiralty, the introduction of which was to be decided in the spring of 1900 according to the international situation and popular feeling.

IV

As I knew how difficult it was for a man of the Emperor's temperament to allow this matter to mature and to refrain from making it public, I sent a request to the Foreign Secretary on October 11th, asking him to bring his influence to bear on the Emperor to prevent the latter from making a premature statement on the navy question on the occasion of the forthcoming launching of H.M.S. *Karl der Grosse* in Hamburg. Count Bülow readily agreed to this and showed

some concern on his own account at the possibility of any political utterances on this occasion.

The launching took place in Hamburg on October 18th, and produced a sensational speech from the Emperor, who, without consulting the Imperial Chancellor or the Foreign Secretary made a public statement, couched in his own phraseology, on our plans, which were still in the elementary stage. With his phrase, "We have bitter need of a strong German fleet," the Emperor took upon himself the initiative in the eyes of the people. Afterwards, the naval administration had to fight more than ever against the suspicion that their actions proceeded from "absolutist influences against which the Empire's constitution had to be protected."

Meanwhile, it was immediately clear to me, after the Emperor's speech, that I could not remain silent, but must either apply the brake or put on pressure. In the first case, all our prospects would be sacrificed. In the second, work must be hurried on at all speed, and now the order of march was changed. Yet there was no choice. But I wanted to wait at least until the Reichstag should assemble in order to discuss matters with the deputies.

The Emperor, on the other hand, demanded the immediate introduction of the supplementary Bill. The Civil Cabinet urged the same: "Bismarck would have made the whole Imperial constitution in twenty-four hours; why did I hesitate like this?" They wanted to distract public attention from the Prisons

Bill, and the navy therefore was to be made the subject of debate.

Thus, while we followed up the Emperor's speech, the Admiralty was still in the first stages of its work. The seizure of German Imperial packet steamers by the English about the end of the year then introduced an element of national feeling into the pro-Boer enthusiasm of the German public, already regrettably high; this facilitated, however, the introduction of the supplementary Bill at the beginning of 1900, to which the Emperor was persistently and impetuously urging me. Moreover, thanks to the co-operation of the political economists, public opinion was much stronger in our favour than even we had hoped.

The supplementary Bill was welcomed by Russia, and Prince Hohenlohe reckoned also on France's silent approval. The opposite was to be expected from England, although the Emperor believed on his return from England at the end of November, 1899, that he brought with him the congratulations of the British Court and the English Ministers and Naval officials.

When working out the second Navy Bill, we hesitated for a long time whether or not to bring the idea of the English menace into the preamble. I should have preferred to leave England out of it altogether. But such an unusual demand as was presented here, namely, the doubling of our small naval force, made it scarcely possible to avoid hinting at least at the real reason for it. Our public could not be taught to observe silence with regard to England,

for, conscious of its own peaceful harmlessness, it believed that it had a right to pour out its moral indignation over the antagonists of the Boers. As all our efforts to damp down the bluster against England were in vain, it was desirable to strike a more sober note in our own declarations on the occasion of the Navy debate. I decided, therefore, in the preamble to the Navy Bill, to give clear expression to the war aim of the fleet, *i.e.* that of an honest political defensive, and I pointed out in the Reichstag, in December, 1899, that the most difficult war situation must be taken as the basis for the size and composition of the German navy. This would occur if we were opposed to the greatest of our possible opponents at sea. To this end the fleet must be so constituted that its highest military achievement, in a war of defence, would lie in a naval battle in the North Sea.

The lay mind must distinguish here between tactical and political offensives. Every warship, and therefore every battle fleet too, is technically and tactically always an instrument of offence; even the spirit of its leadership, as Stosch said in his correspondence with me, must be "galvanized for the offensive." Politically speaking, however, the proposed German fleet offered the English every guarantee of peace, because the latter were two or three times stronger, and it would have been madness to have let loose a war with such slight prospects of overcoming the British fleet.

On the other hand, what we aimed at was to be so

strong that it would mean a certain risk even for the English fleet, with its enormous superiority, to pick a quarrel with us. Herein lay the *political defensive* as well as the *tactical will to fight* in a war of defence.[1]

Thus, this idea of a *risk* which we hinted at was brought home to the people in the shape of the formula that our navy was not to be maintained on a bigger, nor on a smaller, scale than would be necessary to make an attack upon us seem a hazardous undertaking even to the greatest sea-power. The logical sequence of this idea would have been that a respectable fleet would also increase our qualifications as an ally. All that we said and thought quite unambiguously about this risk applied only to its defensive aspect, but it was systematically distorted by the English press.

In the year 1900 it was universally felt that Germany was about to take the unavoidable step towards a world-policy and to send her flag after her trade at least as closely as possible. The fewer big words that were used at such a moment, the fewer perspectives that were opened up (according to the advice given to me by Bismarck at Friedrichsruh), so much

[1] Roosevelt said of the American fleet in July 1908: "A first-class battle fleet is the best pledge of peace; a purely defensive fleet is worthless. To support a defensive fleet is practically the same as the offer of a prize for fighting in which only parrying is allowed. A fleet must be able to hammer at its opponents until the latter throw up the sponge." In the latter part of his speech the President proceeded to talk about the political offensive in a way which, to be sure, was very remote from our conception of the political risk involved by a large fleet.

the better. Whilst I regretted that this will to world-power, which was based upon unintentional economic development and the natural shifting of forces, had created by the various statements in the course of the programme the false impression of its being the outcome of a conscious decision and action, I expressed my own conviction to the Emperor at Rominten under the following heads[1]:

"When our object is attained, your Majesty will have an effective force of thirty-eight ships of the line with their auxiliaries. England alone will be superior to this force. But our geographical position, military system, mobilization, torpedo boats, tactical training, the systematic construction of our organization, and our unity of command offer us undoubtedly good prospects even against England.

"Apart from fighting conditions, which are by no means hopeless for us, general political motives from the sober standpoint of the business man should destroy any inclination on the part of England to attack us, and lead her to concede to us such a measure of sea-power as would not threaten our justifiable interests overseas. Of the four world-powers, Russia, England, America, and Germany, only two are accessible by sea; it is on this account that political power at sea is coming more and more into the foreground.

"Salisbury's saying that the big States were getting bigger and stronger and the small ones smaller and weaker, represents the modern development towards a concentration of strength—towards the Trust system. As Germany is particularly behindhand in re-

[1] Cf. Chap. XV.

gard to sea-power, it is vital for us to make up for lost time. Germany's development to a world-power in trade and industry obviously includes the best means of keeping her superfluous population German. This development is as irresistible as a natural law. If one tried to dam it up, it would break down the dams. The points of contact and of conflict with other nations naturally increased during such a process of commercial and industrial development, and sea-power is therefore indispensable if Germany is not speedily to decline. This raises political considerations, affecting alliances, which are outside my authority."

In January, 1900, I pointed out to the Emperor that our navy programme would never be sufficient to threaten England with attack. The battle fleet, I said, was never intended for war on the high seas, but solely for the defence of home waters, and it would be a mistaken procedure to go ahead with the second section of the navy awaiting development, the foreign-service fleet, before the battle fleet had materialized.[1]

The foreign-service cruisers for which we had asked had actually been refused by the Reichstag, which had of course to make some reduction.[2] The military issue

[1] I made use of the occasion once again to recommend to the Emperor more reticence in his public statements.

[2] As we could not put down more than three big ships in the year, owing to the limitations of our technical arrangements as well as the difficulties of increasing the *personnel,* the six cruisers which were cancelled were not ordered until 1906. Thus the cancelling of them did not really amount to anything. On the occasion of their rejection, however, in 1900, I remarked that we would introduce a supplementary demand for them within the specified period. Hence the demand for these cruisers in

of the second Navy Bill was the doubling of the battle fleet. Further, the disappearance of a financial limit was of importance.

V

In the preliminary negotiations regarding the second Navy Bill, a prominent part was played by the Centrum deputy, Müller (Fulda), a somewhat "erratic" character, who afterwards was not so much to the fore, and who indeed generally worked behind the scenes. To our joy, he moved the abandonment of the financial limit, which he declared to be an undesirable restriction of the Budget. Thus, as we did without a financial limit this time, all our financial difficulties disappeared. The Reichstag's right of annual sanction was left untouched so far as money matters were concerned. The Reichstag showed its appreciation of the fact that it was much more firmly bound from a moral than from a financial point of view; for it had bound itself to a definite shipbuilding programme by the Bill. If ships became bigger and dearer, the Reichstag, which was now bound to sanction the ships as such by the provisions of the Bill, could not possibly limit their technical construction for financial reasons; it could never assume the responsibility for allowing the ships authorized by the Bill to be turned out either too small in size or defec-

1906. I preferred the *whole* of the foreign-service fleet to be cancelled in 1900; this left a sufficiently big item for the supplementary demand, and in addition one which to a certain extent enjoyed greater popularity than the building of a battle fleet.

tive in construction, owing to insufficient money grants. By this *lex imperfecta* as represented by the second Navy Bill, which was binding as regards *matériel,* but allowed a free hand as regards finance, the Reichstag surrendered the possibility of refusing money for the new types of vessels, which were increasing in size and cost, unless it was prepared to bring upon itself the reproach of building inferior ships. Thus, in 1900 the Reichstag decided by legal enactment to carry out the naval scheme which had been drawn up, and bound itself morally to create no more financial difficulties for us, as had so soon been the case with the first Navy Bill.

The co-responsibility assumed by the Reichstag by the form of the second Bill justified itself. When we were later compelled by the English to take the giant's stride to the Dreadnought class, the Reichstag itself proposed the increase to me, although this meant doubling the fighting force of the navy again and the cost as well, still, however, within the scope of the Bill of 1900.

In order to lessen the opposition of the Centrum, I had recommended the abandonment of paragraph 2 of the "Jesuit law," but on the advice of Lucanus, supported by Bülow, the Emperor refused to do this. Matters went off well even without that. Our majority was bigger than it had been in the case of the last Army Bills. I have never met with unsurmountable obstacles in the Reichstag, but generally with sympathy on the whole, even from the bourgeois

Left. Eugen Richter, it is true, accused me of breaking my word, because, in accordance with the general situation at the time, I had replied in the negative to a question in January, 1899, as to whether we intended to bring in any supplementary demands before the conclusion of the six years' limit. I may say that at all times the information that we have given the Reichstag has always been in strict accordance with the truth.

Thus, the second Navy Bill was brought into being, and I was quite aware that it was bound to have quite a different political significance from the first, particularly as regards a policy of alliance, because it gave the other navies of the world a chance of establishing a certain balance of power at sea by means of coalition with us.

CHAPTER XII

BUILDING THE FLEET

1. Technical difficulties. The nature of our shipbuilding. Safeguards against sinking. The superiority of our shipbuilding over foreign navies.—2. Economy and money shortage. My deficient programme. Submarines and airships.—3. Friction with the other naval authorities.—4. Attitude to Parliament. About *personnel*—Are we on the right lines?—5. My last plans.

I

A MAN who has a great object in view is not always in a position to reveal his inmost thoughts. Political work too is based on the divination of certain factors; just as the sailor has to steer by dead reckoning, *i.e.* by calculation, when the sky is clouded over, or just as the place for which one is making will not betray its local colour from afar off. During the voyage the prospect often changes, and it is easy for those who are not taking part to find contradictions or dispute the existence of difficulties. They say: if you only talk properly to the Reichstag, the thing will do itself. Those who are working on some special detail readily cling to it; it is only the responsible leader who feels the welter of the conditions around him.

The Secretary of State was to carry out the great programme for the fulfilment of which he had pledged himself to the nation by means of an authority centra-

lized in himself, which was taken for granted by everybody, but which no one really conceded to him. It was a question of justifying the confidence of the community by throwing all one's energy into the work and overcoming obstacles, the size and number of which exceeded all expectations.

We were immediately faced with a labyrinth of technical and organizing problems and differences of opinion. I found that the structure of our ships was particularly unfavourable. Years passed, however, before I could remedy this evil by setting up establishments in which the best build of ships for purposes of speed could be ascertained by the towing of models; hitherto our technical experts had not thought highly enough of them. We were restricted in the length and size of our ships by the locks at Wilhelmshaven. These two circumstances are largely responsible for the fact that particularly those ships built during the first period of the Navy Bill could not attain the speed of which their engine-power would have been capable. This was a chronic source of embarrassment until the third Wilhelmshaven entrance was built in 1910. Moreover, we were put at a great disadvantage in contrast to all other shipbuilding nations by the sand-bars in our North Sea estuaries, which prevented us giving our vessels the draught they needed. In a certain sense we were hampered by the restriction for which the Dutch had to pay dearly in the seventeenth century in their fight against the British. In all essentials, a naval battle is a fight

of one ship against another; the decisive technical factor is rather the concentration of force in the individual ship than the actual number of ships. Because the Dutch could not build their vessels very big, owing to the courses of their rivers, as the English were able to do, the latter obtained this local superiority. We had thus to overcome these and many other obstacles within a few years, so that in spite of everything our ships surpassed the English in fighting value.

Generally speaking, the building of the fleet was rendered difficult by the low standard of our technical construction at that time. The administrative officials at the Admiralty had been given too much power over the technical side of the navy; the calling of a naval architect was far from brilliant, both as regards pay and social position. The silent struggle between lawyers and technical experts was one of the reasons why we had to begin the construction of the fleet with a *personnel* which was insufficient in numbers and lacking in experience. The technical adviser-in-chief to the Admiralty had fortified his position; he locked up the only things worth knowing in his notebook and would not suffer the existence of a rival. This state of affairs could have brought us to ruin. Meanwhile, technical achievement could not develop slowly, as the organization could, but it had to set to work fully equipped from the outset on the construction of the fleet and accomplish at once almost as much in speed and output as it would be doing ten years later. I began therefore from the very first to try to improve

the position of the technical branch, and to create a "nursery" for it; I tried to get to know the individual members, and picked out those who might develop into future shipbuilders, which comparatively few of them do. The English appoint an engineer-in-chief with almost sovereign powers and press upon him a salary of £5,000. Such "extravagance," which well becomes the magnificence of an old aristocracy, should have been proposed to the Treasury and the grudging democrats of our Parliament! I formed a special fund for achievements in construction, and awarded those men who distinguished themselves bonuses up to the value of £200. But although I sent them the money with a letter asking them to say nothing about it, the punctilious honesty of the German was too strong; the recipients themselves asked for an equal distribution of the fund because of the jealousy of the others! Thus it was no wonder that private enterprise enticed many good engineers away from us; in many cases the men reported sick after a short time and went straight to some big firm or other. In spite of these and innumerable other difficulties, which cannot be discussed here, we succeeded in course of time in beating the English in the quality of our naval shipbuilding, a state of affairs which also became evident in the case of private firms engaged in the construction of big passenger liners.

A year after I had taken office, there occurred a difficult period of transition, in which for lack of other talent an executive officer, Admiral Büchsel, had to

fill the breach as architect-in-chief. Among the other shipbuilding officials whom I intended for higher posts, and to whom I gave opportunities of preparing themselves for the great object before them by sending them on voyages and seconding them for special duties, especial merit is due to our later architect-in-chief, Geheimrat Burkner. Personally, I considered the way he co-operated with us, the executive officers, in our mutual and indivisible task to be ideal. The other members of the technical staff also contributed their full share to our constantly improving and finally unrivalled naval construction. The nature of our shipbuilding, and the sum total of the intellectual labour crystallized in it, may be made clear to the lay mind by an example.

In naval warfare the main object is not territorial gain, but the annihilation of the enemy; since the introduction of steam power and modern artillery this is no longer effected by boarding the enemy, but only by sinking him. So long as a ship is afloat, it retains a certain fighting value and can afterwards be easily repaired. Thus the deadly injury of that part of a ship below the water line is the ultimate aim of the weapon of attack, and the increasing of the buoyancy of the vessel the main object of protective measures. Up till 1906 our ships were but little protected against attack below the water line, whilst the English ships were badly protected even as late as this war. With the old vessels, a hit by a torpedo invariably resulted in the sinking of the ship, as is shown, for example,

by the successful fight of the U9 with three big English cruisers. As soon as the Navy Bill was settled I caused this question of buoyancy to be taken up with great thoroughness. We soon found out that we had to experiment with real explosions in order to gain sufficient experience. As we could not sacrifice modern ships, and could not learn enough from the older ones, we built a section of a modern ship by itself and carried out experimental explosions on it, with torpedo heads, carefully studying the result every time. We tested the possibility of weakening the force of the explosion by letting the explosive gases burst in empty compartments without meeting with any resistance. We ascertained the most suitable kind of steel for the different structural parts, and found further that the effect of the explosion was nullified if we compelled it to pulverize coal in any considerable quantity. This resulted in a special arrangement of a portion of the coal bunkers. We were then able to meet the force of the explosion, which had been weakened in this way, by a strong, carefully constructed, steel wall which finally secured the safety of the interior of the ship. This "torpedo bulkhead" was carried without interruption the whole length of the vital parts of the ship. These experiments, which were continued through many years, and on which we did not hesitate to expend millions, yielded moreover information concerning the most suitable use of material and the construction of the adjoining parts of the ship. In addition to this, the whole of the under-

water parts of the ship were designed for the event of failure to localize the effects of the explosion, or of several hits being made, and so forth; endless labour was expended upon details such as the pumping system or the possibility of speedily restoring a listing ship to a vertical position by flooding certain compartments. Finally, we completely abandoned the practice of connecting the compartments below the water line by doors, which had played such a fateful part in the sinking of the *Titanic* and other ships too.

The buoyancy which was attained by our system stood the test. In contrast to the British ships, ours were well-nigh indestructible. The whole English fleet went on hammering the little *Wiesbaden,* and yet the poor ship would not sink. Although the *Mainz* was almost shot to pieces and torpedoed, it could not be brought under the water until an officer and a torpedo artificer, after everybody else had left the ship, opened the torpedo tubes, submerged the ship and sank with it. The distinguished commander of the *Emden* put his ship at a coral reef under full steam, and yet the inner structure stood firm. It was astounding what our ships could stand in the way of mines and torpedoes without sinking. During Admiral v. Rebeur's attack upon Imbros, the *Goeben* was struck by three heavy mines, but she was still able to return to the Bosphorus under her own steam, whilst a modern English ship of the line, the *Audacious,* sank in the Irish sea after striking one single mine. It was only our older ships, like the *Pommern*

and the *Prinz Adalbert,* built at a time when our experiments on buoyancy had not been concluded, that showed less staying power.

The supreme quality of a ship is that it should remain afloat, and, by preserving its vertical position, continue to put up a fight; in this respect the English navy was so much behind ours that this difference in quality alone was able to decide the issue of a naval engagement. But our shipbuilding also aimed at the highest degree of fighting efficiency in every other direction. Inasmuch as we were aiming principally at qualities which only tell in battle, the excellence of our ships could not even be correctly estimated by all executive officers in times of peace, particularly as we had to abandon a number of well-known qualities and conveniences which are all right in peace-time, to the advantage of our effectiveness in battle. The complete absence of doors in those parts of the ship under the water line was most uncomfortable, for example; such a thing, however, could at the critical moment decide one's fate. In every naval engagement that is fought to a finish, there is the psychological moment, when the one side suddenly thinks "Good God, the enemy is sinking and we are not, they are on fire and we are not"; and from that moment this side will have no more losses, whilst the enemy loses everything. How our ships compared with the English vessels of the same years may be shown by a few figures. Quite apart from our better ammunition, etc., a most carefully conducted ex-

amination shows that our *Derfflinger* could pierce the heaviest armour of the British *Tiger* at a range of 11,700 metres, whilst the *Tiger* could not pierce that of the *Derfflinger* until it was within 7,800 metres' range. A similar superiority in armament and armour-plating, calculated to grip the imagination of any reflecting person, existed in the case of nearly all battleships of the same years.

While translating in shipbuilding our conception of warfare into terms of iron and steel, we were giving up other things which would have won immediate recognition and would have spared us the continual critical comparison of our ships with the advertisements of foreign firms. We had heavier displacements, owing to the thick and heavy armour-plating in the region of the water line, to our provisions against sinking and against fire, to the special measures taken to ensure the safety of the parts from which the ship was controlled, and so on.

We had secured the superiority in quality of our fleet over the English in the decisive years of Germany's development and thereby acquired an important counter-poise for our inferiority in numbers. Naturally few people in Germany knew anything definite about this superiority; many, but not all, trusted the creators of the fleet. Any ship afloat in time of peace did not exhibit its solid qualities and fighting value; it was a matter of indifference whether its armour-plating was thick or thin. On the other hand an opportunity was afforded, and

eagerly grasped by fault-finders in Germany, when it was a question if our heavy guns were of a smaller calibre than the English; it was *not* seen that, apart from our more effective projectiles, we obtained in practice the same results in the matter of armour-piercing with our smaller calibre as the English with their greater, and besides, obtained other very important advantages. The conservatism of my working methods often seemed unnatural in many people's opinion, and was hated to death by those who liked to draw up lists of what they wanted from the foreign catalogues. If our ships, which were handed over to the enemy in such a shameful manner, are scientifically examined, the English will be amazed as they work through the whole, as well as through the hundred-and-one details, at the rivals they had in the Germans in their own particular province of shipbuilding. The English have not been nearly so conscientious and intelligent in their work as we have been. As the English are not Germans, however, they will only reluctantly admit that the foreign work is better than their own. It is difficult for me to refrain from insisting on this point. But if our nation is to learn anything from its fate, it must realize the suicidal tendency in its nature. For many did not understand the weapon that they possessed in the German fleet until after the Battle of Jutland. There was too much delay in drawing at the right moment the historical consequences from the possession of it.

When the German armies went to war in 1870 with

an inferior rifle, the troops were told: "The chassepot is only superior at long range. So run in under its range, and then you will have the superiority at 500 yards."

The German navy had only to be told the truth, and they would have been able to go into battle in August, 1914, with an unconquerable feeling of superiority. Instead of this, it was considered the thing in the higher commands in the navy to criticize all short-comings in detail. This introduced a trait into the officers' corps that was dangerous in time of war; there was more doubt than faith. It goes without saying that we could have improved things here and there. But the final result should be looked at. Our Germany of 1914 was not able to do this. It acted on the lines of the motto inscribed on the shooting range at Meppen:

> You can score a hundred hits,
> And people nod and go their way,
> But ne'er a puppy that forgets
> If you score a miss one day.

At bottom the German nation had a great deal of luck with the construction of its belated fleet, but as it pursued it with a clear purpose in view, it completed this fleet at the right moment. But ultimate and decisive good fortune was denied it, partly owing to the tendency in Germany to find fault with things made at home and to admire everything foreign. It was also partly owing to this that the fleet was not thrown

into the scale at the right moment of the war, with the consequences that I shall deal with later.

II

Naval shipbuilding is applied tactics, but it is also at the same time a money question. If Germany was to have a useful fleet, we could not allow ourselves any large unnecessary expenditure at all. The success of the work of the interested naval officers and the extensive staff of loyal officials can only be duly honoured by those who take our financial restrictions into account. No foreign navy has ever produced such a maximum of achievement with such a minimum of means. As we purchased in 1898 the principle of the permanent maintenance of the supply of ships mainly by renouncing any new taxation, and disarmed the Reichstag by pointing to the financial resources already at hand, we were never afterwards able to burn the candle at both ends. In naval expenditure we were not only behind England, but far behind America at all times, and now and again even behind Russia and France; by a better allocation of our money, however, we succeeded in building the second strongest navy in the world. To be sure, there are patriots today who reckon it as one of the sins of the German navy that it accomplished so much with the means voted by the Reichstag.[1]

Economy requires exact work and business-like principles. The Admiralty acquired a certain repu-

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

tation for beating down prices, for making speculative purchases of land, and so forth. Never again will Germany acquire so cheaply such an admirable piece of work. This rich nation which did not need to count the milliards in time of war, in the time of its prosperity turned over anxiously in its hand the millions—and even the thousands—the giving of which to its army and navy might have secured the permanence of peace and its own continued welfare.

After the resignation of Prince Bülow, who gave the navy full sympathy, the latter fell a victim to chronic money hunger. I have had to fight for the most necessary grants until I was tired out, less with the Reichstag, which evinced growing insight, than with the Imperial Treasury and with the Imperial Chancellor, who, the one blinded by departmental fanaticism and the other by political dreams, suppressed a great deal that was desirable for Germany's armament during those years, because, as they said, Germany had no money to spare for this purpose. I put through at that time what could not be delayed; hoping, with a heavy heart and the feeling of being hindered in the development of our armed defences, to obtain the means to supplement the rest later. There was less room than ever for subsidiary matters; but in spite of this I applied all my energy to new developments, such as, for example, the construction of submarines, as soon as they could be used in war, so that even in this arm we were superior to all foreign navies at the outbreak of war.

The efforts of certain political circles to decry the achievements of the navy led during the war to a campaign of lies regarding my former official activities; this brought home to me in lively fashion the tendency of humankind, and particularly of Germans, to rate criticism higher than creation, and to regard what has been done as a matter of course, and what still remains to be done as an omission. Even in the time of my popularity I was always quite clear that the "Hosanna" of the moment is easily followed by the "Crucify" of the morrow. I do not regret on my own account, but for the nation's sake, that confidence in the navy was artificially shattered, but I do not want to waste the reader's time with these quarrels which will presumably soon fade. I refer to the appendix to this book, which has been added in order to prevent the field being left clear by ambiguous silence for those whose pleasure it has been to decry the loyal labours of a generation.

Even in time of peace I was accustomed to be reproached with backwardness, but I did not consider it correct, in view of foreign countries, to enlighten the public. My tried and trusty method of waiting to prove the military usefulness of a new invention before adopting it universally was proof against disappointments, and was the chief foundation of our successes, but of course it exposed me to the reproaches of the inventors and of impatient patriots. I will take two examples, the submarine and the airship. I refused to throw away money on submarines

so long as they could only cruise in home waters, and therefore be of no use to us; as soon as sea-going boats were built, however, I was the first to encourage them on a large scale, and, in spite of the financial restrictions imposed upon me, I went as far as the limits of our technical production would permit.

The question as to how the submarines were to be used could not be answered practically until the instrument itself was there. The immediate question, therefore, was to construct boats which could operate overseas, and, as soon as this was possible, build as many of them as we could. This was done, and consequently nothing was neglected.

What was to be done with the arm thus constructed could only be shown by the special necessities of war. If the English had not thrown international naval law overboard, wholly in their own interests, the submarine war on merchant shipping could have been regarded from a totally different point of view. As soon as it was possible for submarines to operate overseas, the war on merchant shipping was in the air; no special father was needed for this idea. The great hopes that had been centred in the High Sea fleet, however, made submarines at first the auxiliary organs of the Staff. Then when the transition took place to the campaign against merchant shipping, everything that could have been prepared for this purpose in time of peace was already done. To expect the navy to have foreseen and considered all the developments of the war is the same as to demand that

the army should have prepared some defence against tanks in time of peace.[1]

As a naval officer who had got to know the force of the wind and the malice of squalls on sailing ships, I never promised myself much from the airships, and the war has proved me right in this. I set much greater expectations on the development of the aeroplane. During the Zeppelin craze which passed over Germany I kept myself in the background as much as possible, without appearing a wet blanket. As a proof of the urgent temptation to over-hasty adoptions all around me in this and many other provinces, I reproduce a letter together with my answer.

"BERLIN,
"*August 27th*, 1912.

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,

"Forgive my disturbing your holiday; but it is a question of an urgent and important matter!—the improvement of our airship construction. The new naval airship will represent an enormously big advance. To me the time seems to have come when we should proceed to the systematic building of an aerial fleet; for as things are at present we shall not turn our advantage to any account. The creator of the German fleet should also be the creator of the German aerial fleet. A definite building programme and all that this includes is necessary if we are to retain the lead, and in the circumstances a Bill to this effect. The cost will not be too great, for with 30,000,000 marks we can build in three years eighteen to twenty Zeppelin ships, together with nine or ten sheds each holding two ships, including, further,

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

the cost of commissioning the ships for from 250 to 300 days. This calculation is based on the following annual expenditure of 10,000,000 marks:

	Marks.
1. Building of six ships . . .	4.50 millions
2. Building three sheds for above .	3.00 "
3. Commissioning each ship, 800 marks per day—therefore six ships for 300 days . . .	1.44 "
4. Other expenditure	1.06 "
	10.00 "

"Thus with 30,000,000 marks a very great deal could be done for peace and for our own safety. The money for this purpose exists, in the first place, in the surplus of 1911, of which all was not used by the Army Bill; 1912 is also going well and will certainly yield a surplus. A systematic procedure is to be recommended, otherwise it will be the same as with the navy before 1898. . . . I wish your Excellency a good recovery and with the most respectful greetings,

"I am,

"Your Excellency's devoted servant,

"M. Erzberger, M.d.R.

(*Member of the Reichstag*)."

"St. Blasien,
September 6th, 1912.

"Dear Herr Erzberger,

"I send you my best thanks for your letter of August 27th, which interested me greatly. From it I see with great pleasure that you take a warm interest in the utilization of airships for the defence of the Fatherland, just as you do in the army and navy. I am afraid that the new arm will not be pushed forward

so speedily as your letter suggests. After settling the naval and military estimates of the last year, the Reichstag will not unjustly demand that the Zeppelins asked for should be first tested with regard to their use at sea and on the coast. If that was not necessary, a well-founded complaint could be brought against the Government on the score of its not having put forward in the military estimates of last year a larger allowance such as you outlined in your letter. A thorough-going test combined with the selection and training of the necessary *personnel* is, I am firmly convinced, also absolutely essential if we are not to suffer severe disappointments. The use of airships on a large scale for military purposes will still give rise to many difficulties, although it will probably come to this, but not in a day as your patriotic heart desires and imagines.

"With kind regards,

"Yours faithfully,

"VON TIRPITZ."

III

Busy civilians, and business houses who were not concerned so much with the usefulness of their goods for war purposes as with the wholesale delivery of them, formed only the one wing of my critics; the other was composed of specialists.

To be just, I must say that the enormous leaps forward made in engineering while we were building our fleet had necessarily given rise to lively controversies among the experts, and had occasioned difficult compromises. It proved to be dangerous to make

any definite arrangements a long way ahead. Every ship became obsolete by the time it was finished, and the critics did not always remember that, when building was begun, it could not be otherwise. Internal struggles are also to be found in the history of foreign navies as things begin to develop. Yet the partition of the Admiralty on the accession of William II was the cause of inter-departmental friction, which wore me out more in the course of years than either the Reichstag or the work I had in hand. I stood under fire from all sides.

After the Navy Bill had been passed, the Executive Command was annoyed, because the Bill with its battle fleet did not correspond with the draft of a foreign-service fleet drawn up with the co-operation of the Executive Command.[1] On the other hand, I had objections to the political activity of the Executive Command, which had used its influence in the Delagoa and Manila affairs; it was surely enough for two naval authorities, the Admiralty and the Cabinet, to have a hand in politics. The really natural promise which had been given to me when I took up my duties, that I should be consulted in the use of the foreign-service ships, had not been kept. I now demanded that the foreign-service ships should be put under the Admiralty, but I did not succeed in getting the Emperor's consent. In this quarrel the authority of

[1] For some time the teaching at the Naval Academy had been in favour of the cruiser war, and against the High Sea fleet until I intervened, for it was not fitting for our shipbuilding to be opposed by our highest training school.

the Supreme War Lord was played off against me, which, it was said, would be narrowed if the Secretary of State, who was responsible to the Reichstag, were to receive such extensive powers. I could hardly say anything in reply to this argument, and I had to make the best of it, in order to make progress. So I accomplished the break-up of the Executive Command in Berlin, in the course of which I had repeatedly to send in my resignation; I succeeded by strengthening the conviction of the Emperor that his own authority could scarcely bear the existence of an Executive Command on the one hand and the Admiralty on the other, in view of the powers which had hitherto been allotted to each. A portion of the powers of the Executive Command were now transferred to the Admiralty, and the rest were given partly to the naval stations in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven and partly to the newly formed "Admiral Staff."[1]

This partition was effected for lack of the better arrangement which was unattainable, the centralization of the navy in an Admiralty, such as always existed in England, and existed with us until 1888.

During Caprivi's latter term of office I dissuaded

[1] The Admiral Staff was formed on an analogous scheme to the General Staff. I do not know whether it was a fortunate thing for the army that the General Staff grew so consistently independent as an after-effect of Moltke's greatness. This perhaps led to the estrangement of the General Staff from technical matters and to the fact that the War Ministry had so little to do with war. In any case such a cleavage on the part of the Admiral Staff would not do for the navy; it was an idea of the doctrinaires which did not lead to the institution of a really energetic collective authority.

him from the partition of the Admiralty. Caprivi shared my views. In the next years of my tactical work I had placed too great hopes upon rearrangement of organization among the newly divided authorities, as I did not realize clearly enough at that time that the fact that the Admiralty was so little occupied with active-service problems was due more to persons than to organizations. Then when I took charge of the building of the fleet, it was clear to me and other officers of good judgment that the Admiralty needed other powers whilst the fleet was being constructed than during the period of inactivity. What unlimited powers did not the Americans give Goethals when he was to build the Panama Canal! As we had now to reckon with many heads in the navy, division of authority between many people was still more bearable than the dualism which existed between an Executive Command in Berlin, with authority over the whole navy, and the Admiralty. With all this fencing going on around me, I could not fail to be charged with tyranny and defection from the views I had held when in the Executive Command. The fact is that I had to protect myself from this confusion of forces with a different defence according to my position and the state of my work at the time, whereby the curse of this divided authority kept on appearing again and again in different places.

In the long run the success of organizations depends upon the men who work on them. A great creative work can only be accomplished by one who has in his

own heart the conviction of the rightness of his own aims, and in the main finds the way himself to his goal, or, else makes it altogether the property of his own mind. Advice and suggestion stream in, and nothing would be more wrong than not to give them full consideration. But the decision must rest with those who feel the difficulties and responsibilities of execution. The navy was an unusually finely adjusted organism. The continual interchange of men, selected for the central authorities, between the Admiral Staff and the service afloat deprived the idea of its justification in fact, that the Admiral Staff could as a naval strategic authority judge questions of development better than the Admiralty. Even between the naval authorities on land there was instituted in course of time a barely sufficient working relationship. We also succeeded in keeping in check the natural demand of the North Sea and Baltic stations for coastal defence and coastal warfare, since this could only have been satisfied at the expense of the fleet, *i.e.* the politico-military importance of the navy. Relationships with the Command of the High Sea fleet were not so clear, for the former had gained in influence as the construction of the latter progressed, and was developing a tendency to unite under it all *matériel* afloat.

The French and English put the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet in command of a squadron and thus gave him a "private possession" of his own. We had retained the arrangement from the time of

the Executive Command, however, of putting the Commander-in-Chief on a special fleet-flagship outside the squadron formations. We hesitated as to whether the foreign method which was supported by naval history, or our own arrangement corresponded better with modern conditions. I wanted to clear up the matter by tactical experiments. But I met with insurmountable resistance in this matter. The question of the flagship became a departmental intrigue. In this connection, I was given great anxiety by the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, which was becoming more and more a kind of monopoly; and after the retirement of Köster, a strict master after the fashion of Frederick William I, the Cabinet was not always guided by common-sense arguments, and certainly not by a great knowledge of human nature, in its choice of his successor. From my study of the French navy, which was more accessible than the British, I had seen that a change of Commander-in-Chief practically always led to a change of tactics, and to the loss of a large portion of previously gained experience. I had regarded the chief activity of the officials on shore belonging to the Admiralty Staff to be the collection and co-ordination of these experiences; but the active participation of the latter in the manœuvres of the fleet was restricted more and more by the power of the Commander-in-Chief. Further, whereas the juxtaposition of the numerous corps leaders led to a useful rivalry in the army, the views of the leader of the High

Sea fleet soon hardened into dogma in view of his incontrovertible position, although there was a great need here also for useful clash of opinion. In order to keep alive constructive criticism, for which our Imperial manœuvres did not suffice, and in order to facilitate the rise of independent characters endowed with the gift of leadership, as well as to revive the search for truth in contrast to the drill and the fine fighting formations, I proposed—though in vain—to leave the various sections of the fleet much more independence and to gather them together only for the purpose of the big manœuvres; moreover, I also suggested that these manœuvres should not be actually in the charge of the Commander-in-Chief, but of different leaders from time to time, irrespective of their length of service.

When I am reproached with not having concentrated the navy in the hands of one person in time of peace, my power is being over-estimated. What with the jealousy of different heads, and the Emperor's nature, I was only able to smooth over, instead of putting an end to, the harmful friction which arose from the division of the naval organism into so many sections. There was only one way open to me, and that was not to give any of the authorities with immediate access to the Emperor any predominant influence, to leave the Emperor the feeling that his prerogative was not being encroached upon, and to cherish the hope that in the event of war the monarch would create a Supreme Naval Command which would combine everything in

the hands of one man. The nation, which had no idea of the half-measures of the authorities and the compromises which were hampering production, ascribed all the responsibility to the Secretary of State, a fact which I felt very deeply. But owing to the lack of a unified Admiralty I often had to negotiate between the various sections instead of taking action.

The most difficult part of the situation for me was when the Chief of the Naval Cabinet, von Senden, in spite of his chivalrous nature and his warm-hearted interest in the advancement of the navy, began to pursue from time to time a very arbitrary policy in questions affecting my department. To give a picture at random of my feelings amidst the changing factions and coteries which hardly gave me any rest at all owing to the extraordinary activity of the Emperor in naval matters, I may quote from an old letter of mine to Prince Henry:

"With regard to the question of battle cruisers, I have not succeeded in convincing His Majesty that any procedure in the sense desired by him means the collapse of our Navy Bill. . . . Most of the gentlemen who have no responsibility but a big say in this matter do not see the whole situation. . . . It would really be selling a birthright for a mess of pottage if we were to try to modify the fundamental principles of the Navy Bill in the one cruiser which still remains to be finished. A Chief of Cabinet probably could think so, but not a Secretary of State who is watching His Majesty's true interest and feels himself responsible

therefor. While nothing did us so much harm formerly in our demands on the Reichstag as a certain restlessness and eternal changing of views and plans, we have now actually collected together a certain fund of confidence in this direction, which stands our demands in good stead. If we give the Opposition an opportunity of talking again about the changeable art of war, the zig-zag course, etc., we shall be putting a very sharp weapon into its hands.

"Will your Royal Highness be pleased to take it in good part if I have allowed my pen to run away with me when discussing these worries, but I am very near to despair when I think of the difficult and dangerous position of our State, which is naturally exerting its influence upon the Admiralty, on the eve of a supplementary Bill; and when I see on the other hand how irresponsible advisers are aggravating the difficulty in almost stupendous fashion, and consequently to the ultimate detriment of His Majesty's interests. . . ."

IV

The Reichstag did not give me so much trouble. What had to be passed was absolutely indispensable; but the confidence of the Reichstag in the official handling of armament questions was certainly becoming stronger. By means of information from all quarters and personal inspection of ships, dockyards, etc., the Deputies had convinced themselves as to the way the work was being carried out. This led to the disappearance of all conflicts between the Reichstag and the Government. My comparative independence of the Reichstag enabled me on the whole to let all captious criticism exhaust itself. Under a purely

parliamentary system of Government, on the other hand, progressive officials are almost bound to be stifled by the national vices of pettiness, party jealousy, and unbounded capacity for illusion. It is specially difficult for parliamentarism to build a fleet, even if it spends a great deal on it as in France. The English succeed because the qualities of the nation and its great historical tradition have constructed a firm foundation. Even in my time parliamentary bodies had to be kept in a good humour; a good deal of work was needed to keep them quiet, and a great deal of fruitless haggling; they needed, as somebody said, "a ball with which they could play." Thus, in order to be able to stand firm on the main issues, I sometimes had to sacrifice unimportant things to the Reichstag. Once this affected the personal affairs of the officers' corps, to my great regret, as for example in the reduction of mess allowances; the officers concerned were dissatisfied and mobilized their forces against the Secretary of State, who was dependent upon Parliament. I have, however, always endeavoured to support the *personnel* of all categories.

In the same measure as the squadrons increased and spread the realm of the navy along the coast, and as land was won back from the sea by building dykes, villages expropriated, and whole towns and mighty workshops founded and constructed, the many-membered family of the navy grew far and wide. We were the only Imperial institution which drew the hundreds of thousands from a provincial way of looking at

things to a common horizon. The navy became the melting-pot of Germanism. Before the inactivity of the High Sea fleet during the war killed the life which was coursing through it, the growing strength of Germany could be felt in its pulse-beat. No navy in the world had such an excellent *personnel* as we had in our coastal population, in the merchant seamen who gradually cast off their former international character owing to their service in the navy, and in the fishermen who, particularly indispensable for the manning of our small ships, returned to their villages, after serving in the navy, with a widened mental horizon and professional ambition. When our Old Prussian people on the shores of the Baltic with their handiness, and our North Sea folk with their heavy strength, were no longer sufficient for the growing needs of our *personnel,* we went inland for recruits; service on modern ships did not make the same demands on seamanship as in the old days of sailing vessels. The South Germans, and among them the Alsatians, distinguished themselves in the navy. Under the leadership of an excellent engineering corps, service in the navy afforded a very good schooling for the technical *personnel;* the industries fought for our stokers.[1] The best of our youth joined the officers' corps—think

[1] As the modern ships demanded a big increase of the engineering *personnel* which is recruited from the industrial districts, and since the latter remained practically shut up in the dockyards, this formed a favourable soil for Socialist agitation, the more so since the workmen in the dockyards came most in touch with the engineering *personnel* of the navy. In time of peace no obvious harm had come from this.

of our submarine commanders—and indeed all the more gladly as the magnitude of our task seemed to increase. The outsider can hardly imagine the hard work that was done in the navy. Never has the State been served more joyously and more devotedly. We felt ourselves to be the outposts of a great people which, thanks to its State, was about to acquire freedom and equality among the nations of the world.

Soon therefore the worst was over, and we were able to extend our aims. With a greater separation of the fleet from barracks and home coasts the navy would have grown more and more into the nation, which needed something like this; for it does not know even to-day what a treasure it possessed in the officers' corps alone.

The purely destructive fools who are now exulting over the dissolution of the old Germany as over a great deed ought for once to create an organism which could equal only this one of our old Imperial institutions in solid strength and devotion to the ideals of the whole. The view-points of world-policy were concentrated most strongly in the navy; therefore we were bound to become a power in the nation. Since circumstances and persons, which I will discuss later, squandered the peace which was secured by the fleet, and let slip the victory which the fleet promised, the nation has sunk so low that it is ashamed of its one-time strength and takes pleasure in abusing that which has been its pride and joy so long.

In my proposals to keep the organization alive, and generally in my inclination to follow up the constantly changing conditions of naval efficiency, I often had to contend with circumstances and the special departments. Many admirals stamped me after 1897 as the Director of Administration and the supplier of *matériel* to the navy, although my own line of development and my own inclination was in the direction of naval tactics. As a consequence I had to see a great deal of which I did not approve, without being able to interfere in any way.

The united spirit which had animated the whole navy in the 'eighties and the first half of the 'nineties was to a certain degree lost. The men who were put in command at the beginning of the war would hardly have yielded in such fatal manner to the political leaders' fear of giving battle if the specializing departmental policy which was the fashion had allowed the capital of our previous tactical labours to be drawn upon to the full. When I was acquainted with the operation order of the Admiralty Staff on July 30th, 1914, I was terrified by the theoretical speculation which in certain quarters had over-ridden the spirit of resolute initiative, owing to the subdivided treatment of the main questions. In spite of this the navy was good; it had worked tremendously hard, even though not always in the most appropriate direction. And so it only needed the right command to bring out all its qualities and to lead the fleet, such as it was, to victory.

It is with a bleeding heart that one thinks of the circumstances which have hurled the German nation back into the darkness when it was so near its highest perfection.

To the astonishment of Europe, the Prussia of the eighteenth century had grown in a few years from an indifferent member of the impotent German people to a great power, thanks to the development and good leadership of her military strength by the Hohenzollern kings. It looked as though the German Empire was going to be able to retrieve its belated development to a world-power just as speedily and successfully by the swift creation of its sea-power, assisted as it was in this by many favourable circumstances. The apparent unreadiness of the nation as a whole to understand the grave necessity for this undertaking in every detail likewise resembled the position of Prussia in the eighteenth century, which had been still less comprehended by the whole nation. But imagine what would have happened to Prusso-German history, if, instead of a Frederick William I and a Frederick the Great, a much-divided military authority had had to make decisions under a highly commendable War Council! What we lacked most of all was the unification of the Admiralty.

V

The reproach which is levelled at me from time to time of having pursued a one-sided and obtuse battle-fleet policy, is based upon an error. In comparison

with the historical progress of our empire, we were late in going out into the world and upon the sea. In the bustle of the world, however, we had to expect conflicts of interests. It was important that we should avoid such things, and indeed impose no restrictions upon our activity so long as the understructure of our power was not secure. Until this was strengthened by our fleet and by political support, we could not move with any freedom upon the seas of the world and demand equal rights. Our, and particularly my, personal task therefore lay primarily in the creation of this sea-power, and this could only be done by the institution of the battle fleet. Moreover, we were compelled by the threats of the British in the first decade of this century to concentrate our fleet in force in home waters. Under these conditions trans-Atlantic expeditions, such as the China campaign, the action against Venezuela or the Agadir affair seemed to me altogether undesirable, quite apart from their particular disadvantages, for they only gave rise to jealousy of a State which could not yet be regarded as an equal at sea. During the last few years before the war, however, I saw the time approaching in which England's inclination to attack us would cease, and give place to an attitude which would invite trade on an equal footing. This opened up a prospect of greater liberty of movement, which I also considered advisable for reasons affecting the service. The Prussian military spirit on which the whole national existence and the higher economic life of our people was

founded, and will also have to be founded in the future, has one weak spot; the tendency to routine. It needs great personalities and keen judges of human nature like Moltke, Roon, and the old Emperor, to keep the live spirit going in the machine. The Prussian must have his pig-tail cut from time to time or else it will grow too long. Thus a certain rigidity in diligent, correct but subordinate work threatened to deprive the over-strained officers of the navy of any width of horizon. Particularly owing to the short period of service in our military organization, the life of our battle fleet in home waters ran the danger of losing through continual drill its enlivening contact with peoples and countries overseas. I not only wanted to train the officers in navy routine, but I also wanted to enable them to feel at home in Berlin society and the great world. The training of squadron commanders in particular to a more liberal and universal way of thinking can scarcely be effected without their appearing as independent individuals in the great world. Further, as I have said before, the gathering together of Germanism over the whole world required the support of the fleet more strongly than ever. Finally it was in my view our fleet's mission to react fruitfully upon the narrow horizon of many Germans at home by means of the experiences which it had collected abroad. In conjunction with Germans abroad, who were to be bound more closely to the home country, the fleet was to deepen the understanding for our national existence, which, in consequence

of the increasing population and industry, was no longer confined between the Rhine and the Vistula, but had to sink its roots more and more in activities overseas.

Thus the second item in the development of the navy, the foreign service, gradually came into the foreground again side by side with the first, its striking power. As we had not enough station cruisers for this purpose, I proposed so to organize the home fleet that whole squadrons would be used across the Atlantic for lengthy periods, without their training suffering at all thereby. This was to be effected by a different plan of distributing recruits so that one of the squadrons would be practically manned by men of the third year. My proposal met with the opposition of the Commander-in-Chief, who, supported by the Chief of the Cabinet, evinced a strong inclination to sit tight upon his eggs, and even opposed an attempt to begin my scheme with only two ships. In order to show the practical effect of the appearance of our newest big ships in countries abroad, I succeeded in the summer of 1913 in securing the Emperor's consent to the voyage of two ships of the *Kaiser* class to the States of South America. The peaceful mission of our ships brought off such a striking success that a larger number of voyages on the part of our battle fleet could not have been prevented for long. As a modern battleship is at the same time the best possible industrial exhibition on a small scale, I was also justified in assuming that new connections would

be secured for our manufacturing classes in this way. Such a development of our fleet would have led of its own accord to the establishment of suitable places in the colonies as bases for our cruisers. Apart from Tsingtao I had refrained from obtaining any more bases, as the time was not yet ripe and the money for the fleet must not be divided.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER THE KAISER

1. Suggestions. A constructive amateur.—2. Cabinet mischief. Marginal notes. Lack of character.

I

With the almost immeasurable wealth of love, reverence, and constitutional power which William I had bequeathed to his grandson, the Emperor was the deciding personality on whom the success of the great attempt depended, to win for Germany both intellectually and materially an independent position of her own by the side of Anglo-Saxondom, which was embracing the whold world like a polypus. William II had realized the necessity for this effort even at the time of his father's illness, as I could see when crossing to the Jubilee of the English queen. Even in those days his thoughts embraced all the vital conditions of Germany's existence connected with the sea. But whilst the manner of doing business under our unforgettable old Emperor had been characterized by clearness and resolution, that of William II was characterized more by impulse. With his swift comprehension, his imagination, which was easily distracted by individual impressions, and his self-consciousness, there was the danger that irresponsible influences would

release impulses which would either be impossible to carry out or would not be in harmony with the whole course of action. For a man in a high position it will always be a difficult task in life to separate the momentary success from the permanent. For the merely decorative is always insinuating itself treacherously, and never quite distinctly, in the essentials:

> "Der Schein, was ist er, dem das Wesen fehlt?
> Das Wesen, wär' es, wenn es nicht erschiene?"

Now a sense for the facts was the principal condition for the success of the great effort, and as the Emperor had selected me as his assistant, it became my personal duty to keep the constancy of the course we were steering. This was quite in keeping with my nature. It will perhaps be understood, however, that this duty was not always easy to fulfil in the circumstances. The Monarch's character was the opposite of mine. In the course of time many people had their moral backbones broken. I was able to save myself from that. The Emperor probably believed that he would not be able to do without my organizing experience; but I was an awkward subordinate, and as such I have gone through all the stages of favour and disfavour. An acquaintance once said to me that in such situations as mine the "state of slight disfavour" was the most desirable. Of course I had to give the Emperor his due. I always endeavoured to satisfy the wishes of the Monarch that were capable of fulfilment, even such as were more capricious, so long, that is to say, as I could be financially responsible for

them. I was less successful in damming back the flood of decorative celebrations and speeches, festivities like Kiel Week and the baptism of ships, because the Emperor considered that they were useful for the German public, whilst I had in my mind their effect in foreign countries.

In all essential points affecting the construction of the fleet I had to stand firm. I have not always been able to say everything I thought, but I only poured out pure wine for the Emperor.

Among the questions for which the Emperor made suggestions—and these were very many, to be sure —a prominent part was taken by technical structures, buildings and coastal forts, but the most prominent part was taken by the ships themselves. The problem of how they would fit in with the whole fleet and the money-question then disappeared into the background. The Emperor knew the foreign navies quite well, and with the eyes of a German he inclined to see more strongly their advantages than their disadvantages. Anybody who bore to him some suggestion of distrust in the quality of our own *matériel* always found a willing ear. He drew sketches of ships with great talent and zeal, had them reduplicated and distributed them liberally, as is well known even to the Reichstag, which received them with mixed feelings.

The fact that a body of officials like the Admiralty, provided as it was with scientists and practical experts, had at its disposal more abundant means for the formation of an objective judgment than any indi-

vidual human being, was not readily recognized, and a certain measure of distrust was expressed in our officials. Nor could one demand from the Emperor the judgment of a trained expert in technical matters. Thus I once had to receive the inventor of a *perpetuum mobile* who had been recommended to the Emperor by that original old man, Admiral Reinhold Werner; I had to allow his "engine" to be demonstrated, until Emil Rathenau, who had also been invited by the Emperor, was able to deprive the miracle-man of his nimbus.

Without the Emperor, Germany's estrangement from the sea, and the interests and tasks bound up with the latter, would never have been overcome. That is his historic merit. His suggestions have also been of use in other ways. His drawbacks, with regard to foreign countries, were the great stress he laid upon our aims and successes, and, with regard to home affairs, the ever-recurring clash of personal impulses with the real tasks of the land authorities and the navy. In addition to its excess of work, the Admiralty very often had to elaborate preliminary constructions for the Emperor's plans, which often suffered from internal contradictions. For example, during the last few years before the war the Emperor heard how difficult the improvement of shooting at sea, and the great range of modern guns, made it for the torpedo boats to approach the enemy in battle by day. The Emperor immediately became enthusiastic about an ideal ship which would be heavily armoured, swift, and

armed with many torpedo tubes, and would relieve the torpedo boats of their task. Apart from the fact that speed and heavy armour plating compete against one another on a big ship, the torpedo armament which was to be put below the water line would have taken up the greater part of the engine- and boiler-space. We set to work, however, to comply with the command we had received, and, in view of the impossibility of coming to any useful results, the department gave this project the name of Homunculus. Then, when I had an opportunity of presenting and explaining the draft plans, the Emperor abandoned his idea and accepted my explanation. As a reward I received permission to shoot a stag, so that I was able to telegraph this clearing of the atmosphere to my Chief of the Central Department, who was anxiously waiting in Berlin, with the words "Stag and Homunculus dead."

It became the custom that I should go to Rominten every year during the last days of September to make my report. The air of the forest and comparative quiet suited the Emperor well. He was calmer and more collected there than was possible for him to be in the bustle of the world or on journeys. In Rominten I found that the Emperor was always ready to hear me and to weigh reasons; there were no sudden outbreaks of nervous excitement such as occurred elsewhere, announcing themselves by a certain restlessness in his eyes. On the appearance of such symptoms I used to put all the important decisions silently under

the table. This was, however, not always practicable with questions which required haste. I came to the conclusion that the Emperor's constitution was not equal to the pressure of responsibility. At any rate, both at the outbreak of war and during its course, the Emperor was frequently faced with nervous breakdowns which gave the doctors much anxiety. Perhaps there is also some connection between this and the fact that as he increased in years he inclined more and more to yield to the weaker natures in his circle of advisers.

II

One had to speak to the Emperor *tête-à-tête,* because if there were a third person present his own real opinion was easily influenced by his strong impulse to act the Emperor in every decision. The power of the Cabinets was rooted in this fact.

The Chief of the Cabinet attended the official reports of the responsible Secretary of State, and it was natural that after the latter's withdrawal the Monarch should discuss the matters with him in private. The Chiefs of Cabinets therefore only needed to wait for the right moment and to adapt themselves to the imagination and temperament of the Sovereign in order to carry their own views. There are very few people who would be able to confine themselves to their own proper province in such a situation. Caprivi told me that he only knew of one Chief of Cabinet who proceeded strictly according to this principle, and that

was General von Albedyll. To be sure, our old Emperor had a strong liking for transacting business through departments. The interference of Chiefs of Cabinets in matters that were outside their province led to proposals which were not so carefully considered as those of the responsible departments which have to bear the brunt in the event of failure, and cause the matter to be worked out by their apparatus before it is brought to the Emperor. That the Chiefs of Cabinets remained in office too long was due to the Emperor's fear of changing his immediate circle, but it estranged a man from active-service conditions as he got more and more into the habits of court life. In the navy at least a feeling predominated that the many mistakes of the Cabinet in its own province, the selection of *personnel,* were due to the fact that Admiral von Müller became more and more a court politician, and less and less a sailor.

Any attempt on the part of men in responsible positions to check the encroachments of the Cabinets came to an abrupt end; for as the Chiefs of Cabinets skilfully adapted themselves to His Majesty, the Emperor looked upon them as his clerks, whose main duty was to put his will into form of command. The Emperor has several times stressed this fact in conversation with me. I often thought of 1806. In war-time particularly, the extremely slight power of judgment that emanated from the Cabinets once more became a source of evil to the nation. Whilst I found a natural and constitutional support under Hohenlohe and Bü-

low against the encroachment of the Cabinet, the opposite was the case under Herr von Bethmann.

It was strange to me that neither the democratic wing of the Reichstag nor that section which is honestly concerned about the Monarchy have ever combated the most essential error of the old *régime,* namely the excessive influence of the Cabinets. When it was a question in October, 1918, of depriving the Emperor and the Chancellor of their power, the Reichstag, putting aside the order of the day, proceeded with raging haste. But during the long years before this, democracy had never troubled to protect the Constitution. As a matter of fact the best that we had, namely the work of the Government offices, which was created by positive national sentiment and which every nation in the world envied us, was most effectively ground to pieces between democracy and the Cabinets.

Officious and unproductive forces of the most varied political colouring have always united in Germany to hinder the creative energies of the State.

It is to be feared that many people who did not fulfil during the period of the previous Government their duty of combating the influence of the Cabinets will now apply themselves with so much greater zeal to damning the whole of the old Government system. It is to be assumed that the Emperor's marginal notes will play a part here; their number is unlimited, as the Emperor readily adopted the marginal style of his predecessors. To ascertain the historical value or worthlessness of these and similar expressions of the

moment, it is necessary to have known the Emperor very well. He himself said: "You must not bind me to my marginal notes." He was very much astonished therefore when I once considered it my duty to tender my resignation on the ground of one such marginal remark. On a similar occasion the Emperor said that he used to tell his other Ministers things without their taking them literally. The fact was that the Emperor took it for granted that his responsible advisers examined his statements and that they were able to distinguish what was of permanent importance from what was the outcome of a mood. In general the Emperor also listened to well-founded objections.

Unfortunately the Cabinets helped to give the Emperor's marginal notes an exaggerated appearance of importance. Every one of these notes, even those which were interpreted by the Government offices as suggestions for their consideration, were fixed by chemical means in the Cabinet, in the same way as the pencil sketches of an artist. By this means there was preserved for future writers of history, who are no longer eye-witnesses of the conditions they are describing, an amount of material which if turned to wrong account seems calculated to give a very distorted picture of the Emperor's personality, and also of the kind of Government under him.

When I spoke to the Emperor alone I restricted myself on principle to my department. This meant that my influence on his character was limited, and I lost it completely when during the war I was

deprived of the possibility of private conversation with him.

My predecessor in office, Admiral Hollmann, was a frequent guest at Rominten, and he and the Chief of the Cabinet participated at the reading of my official reports there. His quietness, his practical knowledge, and his personal detachment had a beneficial effect, as the Emperor rightly regarded him as a friend who was watching his interests. If the Emperor did not always regard his official assistants in such a light, even though they were not wanting in real loyalty, it was because, I have been told by men who knew something about the youth of William II, that his tutor Hinzpeter systematically taught him to distrust his future advisers. If this is correct, then Hinzpeter was not doing justice to the Prusso-German conditions of the time, even though it is necessary to teach a future ruler to be a judge of men. I have always found in my smaller field of activity that it works better and brings out good qualities more strongly to give a subordinate unreserved confidence after a certain period of trial, although by so doing one may have an occasional bitter disappointment.

At his hunting lodge at Rominten the Emperor's household was more in the bourgeois style; the fare was homely and the tables were decked with leaves. In the evenings the company often read to one another. Among the regular visitors was the colonel of the nearest Russian frontier garrison who was jokingly requested to spare the deer and the heath if ever he

were to advance against Germany. As a matter of fact the Czar gave an order at the beginning of the war that Rominten was not to be laid waste. The "Supreme Hunting Lord" expected good sport from the navy. It was many years, however, before he gave me the green hunting dress of the Court. I was often taken deer-stalking on Rominten heath in all its autumn glory; but during my official report no stag was allowed to roar, my good friends the keepers saw to that.

The Empress, whose regular attendance gave a special colour to the Rominten world, refused on principle to take part in political questions. If she believed, however, that she ought to interfere now and again in the real interests of her husband, she did so with character and generally with success. I think of this noble lady with true reverence. Her nature was felt to be a blessing for the country by all those who had the good fortune to know her more intimately. When the Emperor suddenly went from the west to the east in the spring of 1915, after a difference of opinion had arisen between him and Field-Marshal Hindenburg, the Empress coming from Berlin caused her carriage to be attached to the Imperial train at Halle and surprised her husband next morning. The well-known picture which represents the Emperor and Hindenburg together in Posen was taken by her.

Perhaps it is incorrect to say that there was a scarcity of independent character in post-Bismarckian Germany. Yet Haldane rightly characterized the

tragedy which hung over our work, when he said after his visit in 1912, as I have been told: "I am struck by the lack of outstanding characters in Berlin as against my previous experience. The almost religious monarchic devotion that William I inspired allowed a freedom of opinion and activity of character to exist which later gave way more and more to an insistence on strict obedience under the influence of the Cabinets. The manly vigour which was brought to the surface in 1866 and 1870, and even in 1848, did not seem to exist in the same measure during the great trial of our day, or else it was not brought into play.

CHAPTER XIV

ADMIRALTY AND FOREIGN POLICY

1. Imperial constitution and business procedure. My political principles.—2. Relations with Russia and with Japan.—3. The Balance of Power at sea. The small States.—4. Relations with America.—5. Our mistaken actions.

I

THE public not infrequently conceives an incorrect picture of the business procedure of the Government. Bismarck's Imperial Constitution did not create an Imperial Ministry. In the Prussian Ministry of State of which I was a member, foreign political questions were hardly ever discussed. The Empire, however, was led by a single man to whom the heads of Ministries were placed in the position of subordinates and not colleagues. The Imperial Chancellor could even issue orders concerning the navy over the head of the Chief of the Admiralty, nor indeed, against the will of the latter, although the Admiralty had a right to a portion of the Imperial authority. The remedy of sending in one's resignation was not applicable in every political situation. In spite of the Civil Servants Law, the Emperor could make resignation very difficult for the head of a department who was at the same time an officer, and the threat to bring about the fall of a Cabinet gets threadbare if used too often.

Now it rested with the Chancellor whether he in-

tended to consult his "deputies," the Secretaries of State, or whether he would leave them in the dark as to the main lines of his policy. The monarchical constitution of the office of Chancellor, as fashioned by Bismarck to suit himself, contained the inestimable advantage of enabling a dominating personality to take effective action. But in the case of a less unique personality as Chancellor, it would have been easier for a Ministry to avoid making mistakes or losing its head if it could have arrived at fundamental decisions in council. Any alteration of procedure required either a more friendly attitude on the part of the Reichstag and the Federal States to the suggestion put forward by the Ministry, or a perhaps unprecedented measure of self-denial in the man who, after the Emperor, enjoyed plenary powers. The public in general presupposed a more profound sense of responsibility and a more active exchange of ideas between the different Ministers than actually existed in fact, and it would have been astonished to discover how unreliable and disconnected the information was which was given to such a highly political department as the Admiralty in the grave years before the war. Prince Bülow's Government had, it is true, instilled into me quite a different feeling of security than did his suspicious and sensitive successor with his inexperience in foreign politics. The monarchical constitution of the Chancellorship became absolutely grotesque during the war, when without consulting the naval authorities the Chancellor induced the Em-

peror to issue naval orders which were practically incapable of fulfilment.

In these circumstances, the number of political moves with which I had to deal was not great. I had no share, for example, in the Samoa business (1899), in the negotiations with England about the beginning of the century, or the intervention in Morocco. I have already mentioned how I was passed over in the dispatch of the squadron to Manila (1898). On the occasion of the China Expedition I opposed the sending of Waldersee and the 24,000 men, as the sending of a whole army was liable to misinterpretation, and the marines which were already on the way out were enough for the real purpose. In the highest quarter, however, the word was "the Potsdam drill-ground must now decide."

In so far as I was asked to give my political opinion I advised: (1) that peace should be maintained on principle, for we gained thereby every year, whilst a war would bring us in very little and on the other hand could rob us of everything; and consequently (2) that all incidents which resulted from attempts at intrusion, which the English in particular would not stand, or from challenging acts, should be avoided; further, (3) that I could only see the assuring of our young world-power by means of a policy of balance of power at sea. I therefore regretted our forming too close a union for better or worse with Austria-Hungary, who counted for nothing at sea; and moreover I had no doubts about our Balkan and Eastern

policy because it contained the danger of romantic entanglement in interests of secondary importance. I was strengthened in this conviction by the fact that England kept on warmly recommending us to seek expansion by these back-stairs. On the contrary we had to collect all our strength to keep open for ourselves the front staircase to the world, the Atlantic Ocean; a preliminary condition of our so doing was an assured continental peace, but our relations with France were unfortunately a permanent difficulty here. While our policy was burdened by our world-wide economic rivalry with England I did not consider we were strong enough to carry on Bagdad diplomacy, in which the interests of the nation as a whole did not promise to prosper so well as in individual economic enterprises. With a policy which was not altogether concentrated upon essentials, I was afraid above all of the loss of the confidence of those Powers which I was convinced provided the key of the situation: Russia and Japan.

II

In my opinion one of the first essentials of successful policy was the timely development of the Bismarckian principles with regard to our relationship with *Russia*. It was necessary to become quite clear on those issues which involved vital Russian interests, but not vital German interests, and to meet Russia on those points. I do not know whether any energetic effort was made in this direction before the world-

war. I shall speak later of a *démarche* which was made during the Russo-Japanese war, but which promised little success from the outset. Our approaches consisted mainly of meetings of monarchs which were indeed valuable for the maintenance of the old dynastic traditions. But other methods, the press for example, were neglected. The land-greed of the Russian Empire was bound to clash with British Imperial interests, even after the conclusion of the Entente. We went and wedged ourselves in along the line of Berlin-Constantinople-Bagdad in the most unhappy fashion. The cancellation of the Reinsurance Treaty by us in 1890 was followed by the Franco-Russian dual alliance. Pan-Slavism was growing, and was pointing its weapon towards Austria and us. In spite of this, however, there still existed many and varied Russo-German traditions and strong mutual interests. Czardom in particular was a strong support for us.

As the situation developed after the cancellation of the Reinsurance Treaty, I first began to believe in the possibility of inducing Russia to enter upon a real alliance when this was rendered possible by way of Japan. During the Russo-Japanese war I attended a meeting in the Chancellor's house on October 31st, 1904, at which Herr von Holstein, at the instigation of the Emperor, suggested that an alliance should be offered to Russia. According to Holstein, the combined forces of Russia and Germany ought to prevail upon the French to join the continental coalition which was so desirable in itself. Count Schlieffen, who was

present, took up the purely military standpoint. He estimated that the Russians would probably be able to mobilize some army corps in the event of a march against France. I noticed both then and in the discussion of the China Expedition a certain neglect of non-military factors in the distinguished and laconic strategist, who was so prominent in his profession; and for the rest, I considered Holstein's psychological calculations to be quite wrong, as did also Freiherr von Richthofen, the Foreign Secretary. I doubted whether an alliance with France, with a pistol pointed at her head, would ever mobilize French forces for us. Similarly, I did not consider that the cold douche which Kiderlen-Wächter gave Paris in 1911 was at all opportune. At that conference in 1904 I also expressed a doubt as to whether the reinforcement of our army by a few Russian corps would really strengthen us, and I laid particular stress upon the fact that an alliance with Russia would increase the existing danger of war instead of producing the hoped-for success of securing us against English lust for war by way of Paris. In the event of a war with England, we should with our fleet in its then undeveloped state—it would in addition have had to dispense with the support of the Russian Baltic fleet—have had to pay the bill with our foreign trade and our colonies, in which case it would be difficult to patch up a bearable peace with England. Herr von Holstein backed his plan very strongly. The next day I wrote the following letter to Richthofen:

"BERLIN,
"*November 1st,* 1904.

"I have been turning over in my mind the difficult question which occupied us yesterday at the Chancellor's, and it has become still clearer to me that not only, as I said yesterday, is the military importance of an alliance with Russia absolutely nil for us in a naval war, but that it does not materially affect the balance in a land war with Englnd. For even if in the most favourable circumstances the Russians were to rise to the height of giving us a few army corps for use in France, the advantage of a hundred—even two hundred—thousand men seems to me to be slight in a war in which millions will be opposed to one another, if not cancelled altogether by the difficulty which would be experienced in the functioning of our military apparatus by the addition of the Russian element. The passive advantage which such an alliance would give us is, however, in my opinion already attained, even without the alliance, by the present condition of Russia. This fact will stand out more clearly every additional month that the Japanese war lasts. Even after the war, Russia will be so crippled for a year and more, as far as an offensive in the west is concerned, that to my mind we can in high policy regard our eastern frontier as not actually threatened. For the time being we should be able to manage with Landwehr formations on the eastern frontier. In this I am not taking into consideration the fact that the personality of the Czar would make an intervention by Russia in a war by Germany on England and France in itself improbable, and I also leave open the question whether we could not obtain such an assurance of security from the Czar on the basis of our previous friendly relations and without an alliance.

"The main fact remains that a real, *i.e.* military advantage does not accrue for us from an alliance with Russia.

"On the other hand, there can be no doubt that a Russian alliance would create for us the danger of an armed conflict with England. After the Dogger Bank affair only a few more episodes of a like nature are required during the voyage of the Russian argonauts. In order to measure the increased danger of it all for us, imagine the publication of the news of a Russo-German alliance at the moment! Would not the whole rage of public opinion in England vent itself solely upon us? The idea of an alliance with Russia is only based on the hope of bringing such pressure to bear upon France that she will do everything to keep England from making war upon us. In this, Russia's share consists solely in the value of a treaty drawn up with other premises, a sheet of paper therefore; it does not consist in real values. In reality, the desired 'pressure' can only be exerted upon France by Germany's threat of war. For such a threat, however, no alliance with Russia is necessary to-day. We are strong and free enough to be able to do this at any moment. It is not therefore absolutely necessary for us to increase the danger of a conflict with England that would ensue from the alliance.

"Finally it is doubtful whether the intervention of France would at all restrain those in power in England from moving against us if they really wanted war with us, quite apart from the fact that there would be no real soul in France's mediation. Should this be the case, however, and should England abandon the idea of war with us, she would only incite Japan all the more brutally and ruthlessly against us; and if I understand the draft of the Treaty correctly, the *casus foederis* for Russia would not occur if we alone

oppose Japan after the end of the war. We could not carry on such a war with a hostile England behind us without powerful friends at sea. Therefore in this case too an alliance with Russia brings us no real help. Lastly, if we take the most interesting instance from our point of view: if England declares war on us alone, and Russia is then compelled to come in on our side, then the existing dual alliance between France and Russia which is directed against us will cripple our decision with regard to France, whilst the help from Russia is of no account to us. The chances of peace could only have been positively influenced by a really clear defensive alliance between Germany, France, and Russia against England, and this is not to be effected by the procedure under consideration at this time.

"After these reflections, which only sketch the main points, I should like to define my own view as follows: While maintaining our friendship with Russia in the most practicable manner, especially by means of the relations between the two Emperors, we should not undertake the conclusion of a political treaty for the present, but await events. On the whole, our most important political object is to gain time and to build our fleet.

"As high policy is *your* domain and my position in the matter is only of secondary importance, I am addressing these lines to you with the request that you should inform the Chancellor as to my standpoint."

The offer of an alliance was sent off. As Holstein informed me later, Russia gave us the cold shoulder. I suspect also that the Russian Ministers made use of the German offer in their dealings with the Western Powers at the time and turned it to good account.

Nicholas II himself was well-disposed towards Germany. The German public had a false picture of the Czar, as indeed it had of many political circumstances and personalities. He was an honest and personally fearless man, with muscles of steel; his instinctive autocratic dignity was coupled with a correct habit of straightway referring all political business to the authorities concerned. His inmost longing was to disappear into the quiet of bourgeois life. This was why he loved Wolfsgarten in Hesse, where he liked nothing better than to be spared visitors. For this reason also he liked to mix with the German fleet, where, released from the restraint of his position, he felt a man among men, and conducted himself in a frank and agreeable manner towards us.

Among his own people the Czar seemed half a prisoner. When we sailed to meet him on the occasion of the Swinemünde meeting in 1907 (contrary to the arrangement by which we were to lie at anchor and the Czar was to sail through the lines on his yacht, the Emperor pressed to go and meet the Czar) we sighted him off Kolberg. In spite of the high sea running, the Emperor caused the boat to be got ready and went over to the Russian Imperial yacht, a thing which the Russians had not considered possible. The yacht, however, kept close to the wind so that it pitched heavily. We could not understand why, for the elementary help that a ship can give to a boat at sea consists in the ship heaving to, so as to form a protection (lee). Whilst we were passing round the stern of

the ship the Emperor shouted to the Czar: "Niki, won't you make a lee?" We could see the Czar, still in undress, trying to make preparations. As we came alongside we noticed that a parade was being held on deck. But the accommodation ladder by which the Emperor should have ascended with the usual grand ceremonial was not let down. Nothing remained but to go forward where a sea-ladder for the use of sailors was hanging. The Emperor was beside himself. We saw the Czar also in a state of great excitement rush forward, whilst the gigantic fellows stood stiffly in immovable ranks; the Russian grandees, Lambsdorff, Benckendorff, Fredericks, and others collected round the accommodation ladder that was not let down. The mounting of the forward ladder was difficult and not without danger for the Emperor. Not even a rope was thrown down to us. The Czar came to meet the Emperor alone; all the others stood as stiff as corpses, for parade was in progress, our arrival unexpected, and neither of the commanders, of whom curiously enough there were two on board, assumed responsibility, in spite of the pleading of our naval attaché, of giving the command which the situation required, and which with us the officer of the watch would have given of his own accord.

This scene put the Czar out of humour for the rest of the day. Whenever he met the Emperor in Russian surroundings he looked oppressed, perhaps because the Emperor immediately became the natural centre of the circle, and when wearing Russian uni-

form moved quite like a Russian in Russian society. Then the Czar, in whose nature there was a genuine Russian force of passive resistance, with little initiative, soon felt himself outshone. The social and political initiative always proceeded from us. So far as opportunity allowed, I have always supported the Emperor's efforts, which were very active in their way, to arrive at a good relationship with Russia, and I was able to enjoy the good-will of the Czar although his nature always imposed a considerable measure of reticence.

In 1903 the Emperor sent me to St. Petersburg to see the Czar on a very delicate mission, which I kept to myself, in the first place because the Anglophile Czarina never left her husband alone with me. My conduct eventually proved to be right. I cannot judge whether this beautiful woman was gifted intellectually; in any case, so far as I could see, she had not much love left for her German Fatherland. On this occasion I warned the Czar about the Far Eastern danger, which I estimated very gravely in view of the merely decorative nature of the Russian Asiatic fleet, which was well known to me. Nicholas II, who personally, could not bear the Japanese, replied to me that he considered the danger was past, for he was now too strong for the Japanese to do any more. I regretted the Russo-Japanese war on our own account, and even on September 2nd, 1904, when the victory of the Russian troops was still universally reckoned on, I elaborated to the Chancellor the danger which

would arise if, in the event of a Russian defeat, we were left as outposts in Tsingtao.

We could not imitate the cool way in which the English helped the Japanese in the war, although we did the Russian fleet more service with our help and advice within the bounds of neutrality than the French did. When Admiral Roshdiestvensky asked that the German naval attaché, von Hintze, might accompany him when he sailed with the Russian Baltic fleet, the Emperor refused permission on the ground that such an action infringed neutrality. On the other hand, however, English *personnel* took over to Japan after the outbreak of war the Japanese cruisers *Kasuga* and *Nishin* which had been built in Italy, and English officers played a very active and important part in Admiral Togo's staff both at Port Arthur and in the Tchusima Straits. In the sea-fight off Port Arthur, Togo wanted to break off the engagement under the impression that he had little prospect of success, but the Englishman on his staff urged him to keep on, and shortly afterwards the Russian Admiral's flagship *Cesarevitch* received the decisive blow. After the feat, for which the Russians had to thank the English just as much as the Japanese, the trend of Russian policy began to turn away from Germany towards England. On his return from Japanese captivity, Roshdiestvensky explained this to Hintze in words thoroughly characteristic of the Russian people: "The Russian gives a kick to anybody who helps him and is kind to him, for he regards such a person as his

lackey; but he will kiss the hem of the robe of anyone who thrashes him." In spite of the fact that Russia accepted the settlement with England after 1907, I retained the conviction that Czardom did not seriously threaten our future.

The navy was not blind, however, to the increasing agitation for war in Russian circles. Herr von Hintze had skilfully contrived to make for himself a place of more importance at the St. Petersburg Court than our Ambassador there, and shortly after the Japanese war he had reported anti-German tendencies in the Russian army, thereby bringing himself into disfavour at Potsdam. But in spite of this the dangerousness of the Russian war party, of the Grand Dukes and their Paris lady friends, and of pan-Slavism, ought not to have been over-estimated, but on the other hand no opportunity of combating them by all possible means should have been neglected. Our Balkan policy between 1908 and 1914, particularly the sending of a military mission to Constantinople, seemed to me fraught with danger.

Nicholas II, who said to me in one of the last conversations I had with him, "I give you my assurance that I shall never make war on Germany," did not want war with us even in 1914. I will not enter upon a discussion as to what extent we should have been able to stem the influence of the St. Petersburg war party by a more correct treatment of the Czar and the Serbian question in July, 1914.

The war with Russia was the cardinal mistake of

our policy, and a speedy conclusion of peace with the Czar was the essential object of a diplomacy which was working for victory. This conclusion of peace was undeniably rendered more difficult by Turkey coming in on our side, and the non-fulfilment of the Hindenburg plan of campaign of 1915. In spite of this an acceptable peace could have been concluded in 1916, when the Czar began to feel his throne unsafe and appointed Stürmer to make peace with us.

It is in keeping with Bethmann-Hollweg's effort to put his political mistakes on the military departments that the most incomprehensible of these mistakes, the proclamation to Poland of November, 1916, has been cast upon General Ludendorff in the most plausible fashion by the Wilhelmstrasse. This is contradicted, however, by the fact that Bethmann described in a Ministerial Council during the winter of 1915-1916 such a solution of the Polish question as the most appropriate one.

After the meeting I proposed to a colleague that if such a procedure were really to take place, the Ministry would certainly have to oppose it. After my resignation I called upon Governor-General von Bessler shortly before the decision regarding Poland, and expressed to him in private my view of the inappropriateness and fatal danger of such a step. It was clear to me that this would not only procure a new enemy for Germany, but it would also cut off one of the last possibilities of a separate peace. As a matter of fact, in consequence of the intensification of the war

spirit that it produced, there could have been no more unsuitable overture to our peace offer of December, 1916, than the Polish Proclamation, which the Czar is said to have described as "a smack in the face for me," and which, in Stürmer's words, "killed the peace." In the middle of July, 1914, I wrote to my Berlin deputy from Tarasp, expressing my fear in view of the impending ultimatum to Serbia that Bethmann-Hollweg's ignorance of English policy might cause an irreparable breach between Russia and us. Without looking into the details of Bethmann's diplomacy at that time, I wrote: "It is only necessary to imagine what sort of policy an English Bismarck would pursue against Russia and Germany. The Chancellor is wholly entangled, bewitched by his idea of courting the favour of perfidious Albion. It is the whole fate of the German people that is in question. *Coûte que coûte* we must come to an agreement with Russia and set the Whale against the Bear. All sentimental promptings must be silenced."

Bethmann himself probably could not have obtained a separate peace with Russia before the Polish Proclamation, because Russia was bound to think that he would surely sell her to the English. It was a catastrophe that the Emperor did not find the strength to effect a change of front in our policy in 1916 and to this end appoint a new Chancellor at that time.

The sympathy of our intellectuals for the Western civilization is also partly to blame for this misfortune. In itself it is one-sided because we have long ago as-

similated the old civilization of the West, and its glib utilitarian-capitalistic mass-civilization of to-day is probably less profitable to the German character than the perverse idealism of the Russians in the East. It was not a matter of civilization here; it was a question of policy. In order to strengthen and spread German civilization, our political independence with regard to the Western Powers was essential above everything else. This independence, however, could not be secured by any border-state policy nearly so well as by the most practicable peace between Germany and the great non-Anglo-Saxon Powers of the East.

Contrary to all historical wisdom, but amidst the jubilation of the intractable democracy of Germany, Bethmann bound round his brow the laurels of the liberator of the Poles. I leave open the question whether he was influenced in this more by his incorrect judgment of English policy or his desire for some success or other, combined with the skill of the Poles in flattering German weaknesses.[1] I did not see that Germany's future was threatened even if the Russian Empire were to be restored to its full power. I only saw it threatened if we were cut off from our overseas trade on which almost a third of the German people lived, and if we were condemned to horrible poverty owing to the impossibility of our regaining our position in the world's commerce. There was no compen-

[1] Cf. also on the elder Bethmann-Hollweg: Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, i., 110 *et seq.*; ii, 13 and 97.

sation for the expulsion of Germany from the seas, which England intended, even if Bethmann's assumptions were correct and we could achieve by military means a penetration of the East. I should have tried to come to any arrangement whatsoever with the Russian statesmen, even Kerensky, and I should have been prepared to make big concessions to them which really left our hands free in another direction. I doubt whether history contains a greater instance of self-deception than that practised by the Germans and Russians in annihilating one another to the greater glory of the Anglo-Saxons.

We ought not to have thrown in our lot with the Poles, at any rate without demanding some return from them. What are not the other nations of the world obliged to do in return for the kindness of the Anglo-Saxons in ruling them? and yet we did not demand a single thing in return for liberating the Poles.

Up to 1887 there existed between the Russian navy and our own a mutual confidence which was almost that of brothers-in-arms. When it was no longer possible to exchange valuable pieces of information in consequence of the coolness which had sprung up between the two countries in their political relations, I maintained our good personal relations with the Russian navy, in spite of the prevalence of the idea of the "two-front" war, by showing them kindnesses which did us no harm. For instance, I referred all the inventions which were proffered to us, and which did

not wholly convince me of their usefulness, to St. Petersburg, where everything new was devoured with ravenous hunger. The authorities there built on the principle of finding the white light out of all the colours of the rainbow. The ardent *verve* with which the Russian Admiralty produced a fleet that was a conglomeration of inventions was not to its advantage. I also gave the Czar various hints which culminated in the following piece of advice: "Do not listen to too many people, your Majesty, but choose a man whom you can leave to do everything alone, or else you will never get any system in all this business." The high degree of personal confidence which the Czar placed in German officers, particularly in Hintze, was valuable political capital, which we did not apply, however, with the understanding of a Stein or a Bismarck. For example, the position of trust which the old custom of attaching a Prussian *aide-de-camp* to a Czar placed at our disposal was never used to its full extent after the recall of Hintze.

After her victory over Russia, Japan found herself in the greatest financial difficulties, because the personal obstinacy of the Czar and the mediation of America, behind which English diplomacy skilfully concealed itself, had deprived this otherwise poor empire of its hoped-for war-indemnity. I have heard from different sides that between 1905 and 1914 it would several times have been possible for Germany to come to an agreement with Japan by granting her a loan. According to my own impressions of those Japanese statesmen with whom I was on friendly

terms, I am bound to consider this possibility as probable, and I am convinced that Japan put out feelers towards us which our diplomats did not understand or did not dare to grasp through fear of the Anglo-Saxons. It is in any case difficult to understand the political soul of Japan. If instead of playing the part of "Jack of all trades," we had felt all the real factors of power upon which the politics of the world are based, we should perhaps have been able, with the help of Japan, to secure ourselves altogether against the possibility of a world-war. In 1915—and even in 1916—Japan could have ended the war with a wave of her hand, indeed could have given it a decisive turn in our favour. The supposition was that we should come to an agreement with Russia and form the main front against the Anglo-Saxons. We had to seek an alliance for life or death with the Great Asiatic Power. So long as the Imperial Government hammered at Russia politically, and made the most public efforts to attain a firm relationship with England, we could not expect Japan to come to us. When we bent before Wilson's threatening Notes, Japan probably abandoned the idea of coming to an agreement with us.

The Japanese are rapacious and greedy of power. In this respect they are a primitive people; they want to have everything. But now that they have obtained the dominating position in Eastern Asia it would be foolish of them to quarrel with America about the South Sea Islands or the racial question. The main

point of conflict ought to be China, whose market America does not intend to lose again, but the Japanese apparently hope to rule China as the Manchus formerly did. I do not believe that the Japanese reckon with China awakening in the near future. They will aim at getting China so firmly in their hands that she can no longer be a menace to them, but must become a tributary State.

If the Japanese were not opportunists in politics they would see that treaties with the Anglo-Saxons cannot avail them anything in the long run, and that their power is on an insecure basis so long as they are not doing everything to produce the best possible international situation for their reckoning with America. The special treaty which Japan concluded with the Czar in 1916 shows, however, that her diplomacy was seeking support wherever a determination to hold out against the Anglo-Saxons was to be found. Now that Russia and Germany have destroyed one another, the possibility of a Russo-Japanese-German alliance, which would have secured the liberty of the world, has disappeared for the time being, and Japan is compelled to carry along the enormous burdens which she has taken upon herself. The future of all non-Anglo-Saxon Great Powers is problematical.

III

Every warship constructed anywhere in the world except in England was ultimately an advantage for us because it helped to adjust the balance of power at

sea. Before the world-war, the omnipotence of England at sea, as well as on land, had not yet been declared sacrosanct. Just as Bulgaria or Roumania for example were able to have, side by side with the great land powers, armies of their own that were of no account in themselves, but which meant a great deal under certain conditions owing to their alliance value, smaller navies were being built side by side with that of Great Britain which were important in the light of the idea of alliance expressed by Bismarck. If an English monopoly of the sea was recognized, then not only the building of any fleet, not only any independent policy, but, I may say, any feeling of freedom on the part of other nations was out of the question. But why did Japan, France, Russia, America, why did Italy and the smaller States build warships?

If it is admitted that it would be useless to enter into competition with the strongest sea-power, there would be no point in any State having a navy. There is no real reason why the interests of the various nations at sea should not be based on a principle of mutual give and take, just as on land. As regards the military side of the question, the strongest power at sea has a greater advantage than the strongest power on land, owing to the unlimited area that it controls. But its omnipotence can be broken by the luck of battle, which plays a more decisive part in a naval engagement than in a land war, and secondly by means of alliances. I maintain the view that naval and alliance policy must supplement one another: the

one without the other loses its effectiveness. The map of alliances, however, was bound to have quite a different aspect according as it was drawn up from the standpoint of international and naval policy, or from the traditional quadrilateral of Berlin-Paris-Vienna-St. Petersburg which circumscribed the usual field of vision of the German diplomat. In this connection, many a small State might become more important than many an old Great Power. Germany acquired an alliance-value with regard to States that were separated from us by the ocean. And as the most compelling factor which had forced upon us the construction of our fleet for the protection of our influence at sea ran parallel with the interests of all other non-English powers who had built fleets, the Government, if it was not going to render worthless the whole building of the fleet, could and must partly extend its aims beyond this new point and partly restrict them.

It would take too long to discuss the omissions of our diplomacy in detail. In our position, one single ally worth mentioning would have been of decisive influence, whether it was Russia or Italy, whose naval armaments could have been constantly strengthened by us in the most opportune manner. Japan's benevolent neutrality would probably have hindered the outbreak of the war. A reliably neutral attitude on the part of Russia in the event of an Anglo-German war would have sufficed, in view of the status of our fleet in 1914, to have left our navy free morally and actually for an offensive against England. In order to

estimate the strength of the trump card which our fleet put in the hands of an energetic diplomacy at this time, one must remember that in consequence of the concentration of the English forces which we had caused in the North Sea, the English control of the Mediterranean and Far-Eastern waters had practically ceased. Our actual policy of alliance demanded, to be sure, no other service from the German navy than the saving of the Dardanelles, which the British fleet could not force because too much of her strength was tied up in the North Sea. The sole use of Austria for our navy consisted in a refitting dock for our submarines in Pola and a submarine base in Cattaro. With allies who were powerless at sea and who prevented us from taking a part in real international politics, we entered upon a war in which the German navy was pitted against the fleets of the whole world.

Not only does Germany emerge from the war weakened, but also the bulk of those non-Anglo-Saxon Powers who allowed themselves to be trailed after the triumphal car of England. A German policy more venturesome and at the same time more cautious (we were incautious in spite of our nervousness) would have allowed the alliance-value of our fleet, the only trump card our geographical position allowed us in world-politics, to be played so as to ensure the peace of the world. As our diplomacy failed, the combination of alliance and naval policy, which would necessarily have resulted in a concentration of our means and ends, was not called into being.

Among other things, we had to do everything possible to win the friendship of our small neighbours. From the point of view of naval policy, a close relationship with Denmark would have been of the greatest use, in this connection much more important, for example, than our alliance with Austria, and I should have been prepared to make territorial sacrifices for a naval and economic agreement with this Germanic cousin of ours that would have made Danish feeling more friendly towards us again. In the course of various conversations with the Duke of Glücksburg, a connection of the Danish royal house, I touched on this idea of a revision of the Treaty of Prague. About ten years ago he was of the opinion that Denmark could have been won over by an arrangement with regard to the so-called Jutish enclaves of Northern Schleswig. I was not in a positon to deal officially with this private opinion. Such an understanding would of course have premised corresponding concessions on the part of Denmark. If Denmark thinks once more to turn our misfortune to account as at a former period when Germany was down, then let her remember the end of that epoch at Duppel, and avoid leaving another thorn in the heart of the German people.

I should have liked our representatives abroad to favour tactfully the interests of Scandinavian, Swiss and Dutch private persons in so far as these desired, and to look after them as if they were Germans. These small States, so important both for us and for

the world, would have greeted the development of our power in a friendly way if they had found in us a natural support in any difficulty, and if we *had enabled them* to grasp the idea of "Europe" as persistently and skilfully represented by us. On the occasion of his Berlin visit Roosevelt said to me, "You would have to take Holland." Naturally that was a piece of bad advice, and its opposite was true for us. It was not permissible to conquer, but we ought to have won over, by bringing home to those small States with maritime interests of their own the certainty that their liberty, which was also our own interest, would be reliably protected against the omnipotence of Great Britain.

It was a misfortune for our nation that she was shown no great objective, and yet one lay so clearly before us. When I told Herr von Bethmann on one occasion before the war that we should have to set the nation definite objectives, he asked me in astonishment, "What sort of an objective?" In my opinion this objective ought to have been to bring together all free peoples away from the guardianship of the Anglo-Saxons. Big words only did us harm, but a definite propaganda in this direction would have helped us. Then the other nations of Europe would have been wise enough to look favourably upon our strength. The building of the fleet had obviously done the nation good; it had raised and strengthened the unity of the parties, national sense and pride, and the assurance of our position abroad. Also it had always been

regarded favourably by all foreign nations, with the exception of the English. Our dignity as a people and as a State, however, demanded some supplementation of our fleet-building in foreign politics. The strong but peaceful support of the non-Anglo-Saxon nations in their freedom alone gave our increase of power any justification in international politics and any prospect of permanence. In its decisive years of development, such as we were passing through, a nation may not shrink from any obligation which is the direct consequence of its own development. All this will presumably come more and more to the front in the consciousness of humanity within the next few decades.

When war broke out I did not represent annexationist aims either in the East or the West. Even a Germanization of Belgium was not included in my wishes. But I did consider it necessary that the Belgian coast should not be allowed to fall under British domination, because this would result in the certain impoverishment of German labour and of German workmen.[1] I therefore desired the creation of an independent Flanders in which we should have the right of garrisoning Zeebrugge. It was not until during the war that Germans first grasped the industrial future of the Flemish Kempenland, and this produced a new reason for making the economic friendship between the Rhineland and Belgium free from British domination. I am convinced that in the course of time the inhabitants of the land round the Scheldt will

[1] Cf. Chapter XVII.

realize that this idea was also in their interest. The small States of Europe will disappear in the trans-Atlantic combine of the Anglo-Saxons, and the strength of Europe, which reposes in the adjustment of manifold independent civilizations within the narrowest limits, will decay and therewith Europe's wealth, its ascendancy, and the possibility of a position in the world for the States of our continent. "The world is rapidly becoming English." Our war was perhaps the last European fight for freedom against Anglo-Saxon world-capitalism, or rather it could and would have been if the Government had only grasped and given effect to the idea of this war. Our Social Democrats, wallowing in the delusion of fighting capitalism, have by their conduct during the war and at its end certainly succeeded in destroying the bulk of that German capital which they were attacking, but which gave the German workman his bread. The result of this, however, is that the Germans are now handed over to Anglo-Saxon capitalism, which is far more brutal and unsocialistic in itself, and also means foreign rule.

Confidence can only be aroused by a State which possesses power and uses it both with firmness and with wisdom. If we were to combat French propaganda in Alsace-Lorraine and Polish propaganda in the East with full resoluteness, we ought to have met a further advance of Danish culture in Northern Schleswig, not with force, but with the methods of civilization (railways, schools, etc.). In this way we

should have shown that we could differentiate between vital and non-vital questions. How many times over we should have been repaid during the war if we had fulfilled the heartfelt desires of the Danish patriots in time of peace! Thus even during the war I myself was always in favour of showing the world that we represented the spirit of Europe more purely and more humanely than any of our opponents, in contrast to the hypocritical brute-force of the Anglo-Saxons and in complete contradiction of the calumnies in such expressions as "Boche" or "Hun." In this connection I wished that we had abstained from reply in kind to the barbarous custom introduced by England of interning defenceless and harmless civilians. I was also against initiating aerial attacks upon open towns and civilian populations begun by the enemy, so long as no appreciable military damage was done—and their effect was a mere pin-prick, compared with the concentrated use of the aerial weapon for definite and important military objectives (City of London and Docks).

IV

Our relations with *America* had undergone a needless change for the worse in 1898, owing to the appearance of our squadron off Manila. When I visited the Philippines officially in 1896 with the Far-Eastern squadron, the Islanders, who were then at war with the Spaniards, approached me with the idea of establishing a German protectorate there, and they tried to

persuade me to save a rebel leader who had been condemned to death by the Spaniards. Naturally I refused to intervene in this way; so far as I know, the idea of extending German power to the Philippines was never afterwards seriously considered in any quarter in Germany. Whilst we appeared off Manila during the Spanish-America war with a squadron which was stronger than the American, we maintained ticklish relations between the two navies, and on the occasion of a collision with Admiral Dewey, Flag-lieutenant (later Secretary of State) von Hintze upheld German honour by his cool-headedness and prevented the danger of a conflict. There remained, however, in the United States, which had just stepped into international politics with a definite purpose in view, the suspicion that we had made an unsuccessful attempt to poach on preserves which they had discovered first. This vexation, which was skilfully fed by the English press and diplomacy, swelled the suspicion that we were cherishing intentions on American territory. The Americans were ignorant of European affairs, and sensitive enough with their Monroe Doctrine to believe this kind of nonsense.

When in 1902 the English Government invited us to take common action with Roosevelt's consent against the brigand President of Venezuela, Castro, I advised, in the conference at the Foreign Office, against compliance, basing my opinion on my impressions of American character and English policy. Carl Schurz, in whom German-Americans still had a leader at that

time, had warned me. I declared that if matters came to an armed conflict, the Monroe dogma might inflame America, in which case the English would probably leave us in the lurch.

Unfortunately this did actually happen. I had urgently recommended the Emperor before his journey to England to obtain an unconditional promise from the English that they would see us through. I do not know whether this was done; at any rate we accepted England's suggestion. Roosevelt, however, was not able to hold American indignation in check, even if he had wanted to do so, and the British press was base enough, with the tolerance of its Government, to face about, at once to rouse the Americans and attack us "Huns." [1]

There was no longer any hope of German interests being spared in those cases where both Anglo-Saxon Powers had to deal with them in common. Whether the upshot of it all would be that England would really become the "forty-ninth star in the Stars and Stripes,"

[1] It was at this time that Rudyard Kipling, who had been flattered by our Emperor, paid him back for the unfortunate "Hun speech" of the days of the China Expedition in his poem "The Rowers," in which he calls the Germans "Goths and shameless Huns." The same astonishing lack of conscience as in the Venezuela dispute was again shown by the English press, with the silent approval of the British Government, over the Hull incident two years later. For a short time the Jingo press raged against the Russians, who had bombarded English fishing-vessels in the North Sea under the impression that they were Japanese torpedo boats, a mistake which was not so unforgivable in view of the open support given to Japan by the British navy. Then on an invisible signal the rage of the press broke off suddenly and turned with redoubled force against Germany, who had no share in the affair at all! That was a plain lesson for anybody who had eyes to see.

as the American naval attaché said to our attaché in London, was a secondary matter for us. At the beginning of the century England had considered for the last time whether she should turn upon America or not, and had decided not to do so. My personal impressions took the same line as my political experiences, and our sentimental politeness towards the Union did not improve the situation. It was painful to me to have to attend the presentation of the statue of Frederick the Great to the sceptical Yankees. I never shared the illusion which is so fatally prevalent with us that the power of America might become some time and somehow a useful assistant to us against the British dictatorship of the seas. Moreover of all the greater navies, I have always put the lowest value on that of America as a possible asset.[1]

The longer our young sea-power was established, the more numerous and free were our chances in world-politics. Thus, provided peace was kept between England and Germany, the development of fruitful relations between America and ourselves was not at all out of the question. When Roosevelt, who knew me well and often engaged me in long conversations, advised me that Germany would have to regain control over the mouth of her main river and gather round her the small Low German States on the lower

[1] The American navy, treated as the passive element it was, was just as little dangerous as the French; it watched with a certain jealousy the German navy attaining a much higher fighting value, although the latter's building expenditure was smaller by some milliards.

Rhine and the Scheldt, he was being thoroughly honest and only speaking in his own fashion "roughly." He started from the assumption that England's world-power would gradually disappear and that we should become America's natural ally against Japan. The effect of the Anglo-Japanese alliance was to make Roosevelt attach great important to the growth of the German fleet. Before the American fleet was sent to the Pacific Ocean in 1908 (there was no Panama Canal then), Roosevelt asked me unofficially, through his ambassador in Berlin, whether I would take on the responsibility of this naval move if I were in his place. I replied, "I should risk it"; and I saw some advantage for us in this action. As a matter of fact one of the results of that American voyage was to make Australia lean strongly away from England towards America. We only drove back the colonies to the mother-country by the war. Later Roosevelt sent me his photograph with a flattering inscription signed: "From one who sent the American fleet round the world."

The natural sympathies of the Americans were with the English. But apart from this there existed inclinations towards businesslike relations between American policy and ours. The Americans took Germany very seriously in every respect before the war, and in spite of their collective idea of Europe they had a fine feeling for our rising power and a sober respect for the possibilities it contained. They were already reckoning with the chance of our economic and political

development being able to overhaul the English hand over fist. At the same time the Americans regarded themselves as the natural heirs of the English colonies. If we waited for things to develop in time of peace, then those interests which were common to America and ourselves grew by natural process from year to year. When we slid into the war in 1914 one of the gravest consequences of this terrible fact was that we brought to maturity the Anglo-Saxon sense of common responsibility, instead of sending it to sleep.

The Americans, who interpreted the firing of the powder magazine on the *Maine* as a crime, in order to be able to annex Cuba, would have regarded the invasion of Belgium with a very cold eye if it had agreed with their own interests. America is a world-conquering Power, a fact which our democrats refuse to realize. The outward superiority of our enemies brought the Americans from the very first day to the conviction that we should not win, and they defined their attitude towards us on this principle. In spite of this America was not yet ready for war against us from 1914 to 1916, and was not able to fall upon a fearless German war-policy. It was the length of the war, the growing intertwining of interests with the Entente, England's military needs, the illusory, dilatory, and zigzag policy of Bethmann-Hollweg with its transference of prestige in Wilson's favour, and finally Zimmermann's Mexican letter which prepared and facilitated America's entry into the war in 1917,

which could only have been effected by Wilson with far greater difficulty, perhaps not at all, in 1917, when I wanted the submarine campaign.[1] The determining feature was: we had to end the war swiftly and we could not afford to lose prestige.

The situation would have been quite different if the world-war had been avoided. The Anglo-Saxon family would never have suffered a military defeat of England. But a peaceful triumph over England by us would have been accepted as a natural thing, would have secured for "Germanism" a rising reputation even in the American hemisphere, and would have made us ultimately a real world-state and a desirable ally for the strongest power of the future. However Germany may now develop, these possibilities are past; and if ever our nation is again in a position to make useful alliances, this can only apply to Powers of another grade. Before the world-war we had rich possibilities of establishing a balance.

V

The construction of the fleet needed *peace* if it was to succeed. The nearer the fleet approached completion, the more it secured on its own part the peace which Germany needed more urgently for her continued prosperity, and which in view of her geographical position she found more difficult to maintain than any other big State. The decades before the world-war were characterized for Germany by the highest degree of prosperity and exposure to danger, together with strong, but not quite adequate, protection in her

[1] Chapter XIX.

own power. At several periods of his term of office Bismarck was called a "juggler"; and the undoubtedly skilful personality of Prince Bülow received the honourable appellation of "tight-rope dancer" on his regrettable departure from office. In Germany's position only extraordinary attention to the changes in the situation could secure her from harm. We could not allow ourselves the luxury of making mistakes. Bismarck once said on hearing some complaints about Caprivi's Chancellorship: "Just wait until you have a real bureaucrat for a Chancellor, then you will see what it is like." A stiff-necked illusionist like Bülow's successor fell a victim to the complications of the international situation owing to his inability to weigh up a situation. The chief essential for a leader of the German Empire was, and will always be, an understanding of foreign politics. This does not necessarily entail the black magic of diplomacy, but a knowledge of the real fundamental condition of the world, and a sense of the probable. Neither Chancellor nor democracy had any idea of the true difficulty and danger of our position, which had to be tackled with forceps.

But can a nation which shows no skill in its own affairs, and which inclines to self-abandonment if it has not the right leader, hope that Providence will favour it again and again with a guardian like Frederick the Great or Bismarck? In our day we can see the leaderless masses who have barely attained their full power doing nothing more zealously than pulling

down and breaking up all that was left us of national tradition, pride, and good-will. It is as though they were afraid that a great patriot might again arise destined in the future to bear the nation once more across the broad stream of its self-humiliation.

Our lack of dignity in adversity, as well as our insufficient restraint in good fortune, are due at bottom to the illusion that our encompassed position in the world could be overcome by words and feelings, instead of solely by power rigidly held and skilfully applied.

It was a common fundamental failing of our policy to use up piecemeal the great but insufficient reputation of power which Bismarck left us, by means of repeated demonstrations, which showed our love of peace but also our nervousness; it was too liable to result in our giving way, and earned for us from the enemy the fatal character of a *poltron valeureux*. The bad habit of these sensational interventions such as Shimonoseki, the Krüger telegram, Manila, the China Expedition, Tangiers, right up to Agadir and others, led to its culminating blunder in the ultimatum to Serbia, July, 1914. Thanks to the respect inspired by the old Prussian State and the thoroughness of the German people we had managed to scrape along for some time. But it would have been better to grow in silence and to gather more power; for in 1914 we were near to the goal which made the mere presence of our power suffice to maintain peace without any nervousness on our part. It ended in the

tragedy that the most peace-loving policy in the world thought to better our unfavourable position by means of an attitude which gave our malicious enemies the pretext for putting upon us the suspicion of the will to war, thereby disfiguring our image by one of the most monstrous calumnies in the history aof the world.

We threw ourselves into the arms of others and then offended them, and we scarcely neglected an opportunity of representing to them how wonderfully well we had got on. We never saw ourselves from other people's point of view. Admiral Seymour, who was presented by the Emperor with the picture "The Germans to the Front," said to a German naval officer: "You Germans have come on very much; if only you would not always be ramming it down our throats." We blew trumpets which were not in keeping with our position. Then all real or intended mistakes and injuries were magnified in an inflammatory manner and dragged into the open, and in this way our democratic press gave foreign countries apparent proof that Prussian Germany was a house of correction.

The circumstances of my department caused me doubly to condemn all these demonstrations in international politics. On the other hand, I saw with anxiety how little the whole situation, political, strategic, and economic, its enormous prospects, and its particular dangers was generally realized. The danger of a blockade, for example, or more especially of a war with England, who could cut off our whole

position and future in the world as with a knife, was not viewed with the gravity it demanded, as I was often compelled to observe. In view of England's endeavour to encompass us with a coalition, it was a question of our keeping our nerve, continuing to arm on a grand scale, avoiding all provocation, and waiting without anxiety until our sea-power was established and forced the English to let us breathe in peace. We have done the opposite to all this, and thus at the very moment when relief was already in sight, the storm cloud, which had already begun to move away, burst over us. The possibility of a war with England ought to have been avoided in 1914 just as in 1904, and it could probably have been avoided too, as the naval gamble had already taken effect, if only our political leaders had clearly perceived the danger of this war at the right moment. If an actively developed sense of power and its governing laws had been able to prevent the growth of the illusion of a localization of the Austro-Serbian conflict in the German people and its political leaders in July, 1914, the world-war would have been avoided at that time.[1]

The difficulty of arriving at a bearable peace in the event of a war with England determined my vote in 1904, which I mentioned above. After the outbreak of the world-war, seventeen years of fleet-building had, it is true, improved the prospects of an acceptable peace with England, but only if our leaders showed

[1] Chapter XVI.

the utmost energy in war, diplomatic skill, and unselfish devotion. I therefore represented, with all the strength I possessed, the only points which could bring us this peace and keep destruction away from us; the war at sea and the well-timed submarine campaign, the separate peace with Russia, and the unity of the German nation in the face of the deadly danger into which we had stumbled, and which had been clearly seen only by very few.

I was beaten in this struggle; the German capacity for self-delusion once more overcame Germans by Germans. The end of my career and my faith in my people was to see the war lost by weakness, blindness, and party spirit.

I fought against our self-annihilation without possessing sufficient power to do so. Occupied as I was with my own duties, I had never striven for political power. In December, 1911, after the Morocco crisis, when my quarrel with Bethmann began, the Chief of the Cabinet informed me, as I was going in to give my report to the Emperor, that the question of appointing me to the Chancellorship was being considered. During the audience I pushed over to the Chief of the Cabinet a note to the effect that I should refuse such a proposal if it were made to me. At that time it seemed to me unthinkable to become Bismarck's successor. It was only when I saw during the war how the Government lost its head and its courage and one irrecoverable chance after another, and how the Empire was tottering towards the abyss,

that I probably should not have refused the Chancellorship, conscious though I was of my shortcomings, provided no more suitable person was to be found. For as our situation appeared abroad, my appointment would have meant a clear break with the existing system. Let us remember the joy in England when things were reversed, and the word went round "*Tirpitz exit.*" Our only salvation lay, not in any change of individual, but in this change of system.

The suggestion was several times made to me in those days, but not from the only quarters which had the power to act.

CHAPTER XV

ENGLAND AND THE GERMAN FLEET

1. English economic jealousy and the "danger zone" in naval shipbuilding.—2. Beginning of the English naval scare. Our supplementary Navy Estimates in 1906 and 1908. Admiral Fisher's naval scare. Considerations of a naval agreement with England.—3. Agadir. The necessity for a Navy Bill in 1911. A controversy regarding the Estimates.—4. Haldane's mission.—5. Criticisms of "my naval policy."—6. Marschall in London Relief.

I

THERE are many who declare that the German Empire would have been able to obtain a proper friendly relationship with England, and that it was only neglect on the part of German policy, and particularly the building of our fleet, that destroyed this prospect. If ever this idea were to establish itself in German minds, it could be taken as a proof of the saying that history is written by the victor; and in this present case the vanquished would be cheating in order to be able to pay allegiance to the Anglo-Saxon hegemony in its historical conscience.

But now the English are denying that they wanted the war against us. Anybody therefore in Germany who makes the building of the fleet responsible for the war cannot even bring forward the enemy as witness. This self-accusation is on the wrong track;

the historical truth lies much more in one of Bismarck's last statements in 1898, at a time when we had no fleet: "He was sorry that relations between Germany and England were not better than they are. Unfortunately he knew of no way to improve them, as the only means which he could think of consisted in our putting a check on German industry, and was not therefore applicable." We could not win England for a friend and supporter without sinking back to the level of a poor agricultural State. But there existed a means wherewith to improve our relations considerably—the creation of a German fleet which would make an attack upon German trade a more risky venture for England than it was at the time of Bismarck's utterance. In this sense the German fleet did its duty right up to July, 1914, in spite of the failure of German policy on different occasions, and it is not its fault that it was unable to fulfil its peace-preserving purpose better and longer. For me it is difficult to understand how Herr v. Bethmann-Hollweg continues to blame the "so-called naval policy," which he himself countersigned for eight years when he was Chancellor.[1] It is all the more difficult to understand because both he and Lichnowsky and other Foreign Office experts established a definite relief of the tension in Anglo-German relations during the years preceding the war, and because they all acknowledged that, as the German fleet approached completion, it did not prevent at least an improvement

[1] *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* November 27th, 1918.

in our relations with England. The outbreak of war, however, was not due to any deterioration of Anglo-Saxon relations; there is even a particularly tragic association to be seen in the fact that Germany and England had come closer together in 1914 than during the period when Germany was without a fleet in 1896, or when her fleet was weak in 1904 and Count Bülow succeeded in crossing the danger-zone. The German fleet preserved peace according to its aim and purpose. To-day those parties concerned are assailing this clear fact; and in addition there is that German tendency to self-depreciation which is always ready to believe unfavourable things, and is glad when it can abuse as nonsensical to-day what seemed intelligent yesterday.

Up to the beginning of the 'nineties the old-established prosperity of England had scarcely felt the parasitic existence of " Germanism " on the world's trade. The growth of our industrial and commercial development was indeed begun by the alteration of our customs policy in 1879, but it was not until after a decade of internal construction that it became so palpable abroad as to prepare the ground for a general change of feeling in England. The latter's first counter-blow was the phrase " Made in Germany," and her first political outbreak followed the Krüger telegram. In 1896-97 I came home from Asia and America with the impression that England would do her best to obstruct our future development. In the middle of the 'nineties the principal clubs of the two

chief political parties, the experts of English society in foreign politics, had united in the conviction that Germany was the common enemy. This was in accordance with the political principle practised by the English for centuries.

As usual there was a certain interval between the change of front on the part of the political wire-pullers and its public expression. Then followed the working up of the English public on a grand scale; the tendency of this campaign might be represented by the battle-cry "Germaniam esse delendam," under which heading *The Saturday Review* wrote the following notable sentences in 1897:

"Bismarck has long realized what the English people are also beginning at last to see, that there are in Europe two great irreconcilable forces opposed to one another, two great nations who would like to make the whole world their domain, and exact commercial tribute from it. England . . . and Germany . . . the German commercial traveller and the English trader . . . are competing with one another in every corner of the globe. . . . A million petty worries are creating the greatest *casus belli* which the world has ever seen. If Germany was exterminated from the world to-morrow there would not be an Englishman in the world the day after who was not so much the richer. Nations have fought for years for a town, for a right of succession; must they not go to war for an annual trade of five milliards?"

If one gives to such prophetic utterances, which were not isolated, but the leaders of a thousand-voiced

chorus of hatred, all the weight which they possess to-day, one feels immediately that it could not have been pleasant for the English to base the hatred which they were hammering into their people so blatantly in view of the decision that has been accomplished, and so unpleasantly, simply on trade jealousy, which was the really decisive factor. They needed pretexts. As the first Navy Bill had not yet been introduced at the time when the public was to be inoculated with these ideas, the pretext of the navy was wholly lacking. Those who directed British public opinion therefore had to make use of hypothetical German designs upon the Transvaal. When these were done with, they made use of the German fleet, to which they attributed the most grotesque offensive plans when the bulk of the fleet only existed on paper—all for the benefit of the English newspaper reader.

The Navy Bill provided the first opportunity for a moderation of England's desire to destroy us, because it would not have been so easily satisfied once the fleet was completed. On the other hand, it goes without saying that the fact of our building a fleet was felt by England to be an encroachment upon her monopoly of the seas, and that in this respect the building of the fleet made our diplomatic position more difficult. The question then arose whether England would not want to nip our fleet in the bud and therefore force a preventive war because we were building a fleet? As a matter of fact we were not very far off this danger in 1904-5; at that time the seriousness of our

naval work was recognized on the one hand, and on the other our strength was still undeveloped.

It was only the unpreparedness of France and the English army which prevented the collision then. That was the danger zone which in Bülow's opinion and mine we had to pass through; in 1914, however, the bulk of it was overcome. Our navy had acquired too much respect for England to want to attack it without very weighty reasons. So the pugilistic tone of the 'nineties changed in time to a more cautious and sober view, as the German power at sea became more firmly established; and in this sense the German fleet acted after 1912 more and more as a factor for the maintenance of peace. No English statesman, if he was honest, has ever had any doubt as to the peaceful tendency of our policy at bottom, and the purely defensive intentions of our fleet.

The building of the fleet moreover did not prevent Chamberlain from seeking an alliance with us in 1901, in which matter he was at any rate comparatively isolated in the Cabinet. In reality, however, the fleet never stood in the way of an alliance if such a thing had ever been seriously considered by England; but even the Germany of the 'nineties, who had no fleet, tried in vain, as Caprivi told me in 1893, to secure an alliance with England.

England did not find it necessary and expedient to conclude formal alliances with other Powers, as we did with Roumania and Italy for example. She contented herself with establishing a general confidential

relationship with those Powers, whom she could use for her main purpose, without binding her hands, which was more convenient in home politics and more effective in foreign politics. Before the building of the German fleet, that is before the beginning of the commercial jealousy, the foundation was laid for the policy of *entente* and encirclement against Germany.

The *rapprochement* between French diplomacy and England began in 1898-9 with the Fashoda agreement, which was so much misunderstood in Germany, and by January, 1901, there already existed within the British Cabinet a feeling in favour of an agreement with France and Russia at the cost of English sacrifices in Morocco, Persia, and China.[1] After that the Entente worked upon the public mind of all three nations with all the methods which German diplomacy despised, in order to bring them all into line on a common front against Germany, by suppressing their mutual differences. The reasons which appeared in the 'nineties, and urged the English either to overthrow or encircle Germany, continued to exist, and it could not be demanded of our fleet-building that it should alter the fundamental motives of English policy. It was enough for the fleet to provide the Government with an instrument which gave Germany more elbow-room, in spite of the policy of encirclement, through the fact that the mere existence of the fleet

[1] O. Hammann, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieger* (1918), p. 124; H. von Eckardstein, *Diplomatische Enthüllungen zum Ursprung des Weltkrieges* (1918), p. 17.

continually widened the gulf between England's inclination to war and her resolve to make war.

Late in 1904 England gave an impressive proof of her substitution of hostility to Germany in place of the traditional enmity towards Russia, on the occasion of the unscrupulous change of front in the Dogger Bank affair. After Japan, in the capacity of a British vassal, had beaten the Russians, England saw that the hour had come when merely by pressing the button she would be able to set France and Russia in motion against Central Europe. This big offensive policy against us was only hypothetically aggressive. A peaceful encirclement would have been far pereferable to Edward VII and his circle than the gamble of war. The building of the German fleet was now improving from year to year the conditions for an Anglo-German understanding, for it was repressing England's own inclination to war and was giving more sober-minded English politicians the upper hand. Whilst the gigantic growth of German industry in the first decade of the century was able to take place independently of armed power, chiefly because France and Russia were not "ready," the reverse was the case in 1914, for England had become the most hesitating party in the Entente with regard to the war. Without a German fleet we should not have been able to continue for long our trade competition with the three Entente Powers. As a result of the fleet, however, the unaltered tension between England and Germany had become less dangerous. According to the unanimous

judgment of the initiated, it was less dangerous during the time of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia than during the long years before.

After 1903 at the latest, however, England's political principle was to suffer no longer the military weakening of France by Germany, or the military shifting of the European balance of power to the advantage of the strongest continent power, Germany. The unhappiest moment of German policy was when it forgot this fundamental fact in July, 1914, and confirmed the biting words of a certain French officer to a German medical officer: "*Vos armées sont terribles mais votre diplomatie—c'est un éclat de rire.*"

II

During the first years of the policy of encirclement the English did not yet take the building of the German fleet seriously. They were convinced that no first-class fleet could be built with the small sums that were expended. They considered that our engineering side was still too undeveloped, and our lack of organizing experience too great, and they were accustomed to see many Prussian and German shipbuilding programmes remain scraps of paper. Our naval programme was not regarded with different eyes until 1904. At that time all the ships which we possessed were paraded before Edward VII during Kiel Week against my wishes, and the Emperor gave as a toast "the reviving sea-power of the newly created German

Empire." King Edward's reply was cool, and during his inspection of our ships he exchanged many meaning looks and words with Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty, which impressed me unpleasantly. It seemed uncanny to the English that we should do so much with such small means, and show an organic development which surpassed their own in systematic thoroughness. The patient "laying one stone upon another" of the German method seemed to them dangerous in this instance too.

The ensuing concentration of British squadrons against us was stressed in February, 1905, by a speech from the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lee, who declared, without any tangible reason, that if necessary the British fleet would be able to deal the first blow before they had time on the other side of the North Sea to read the declaration of war in the newspapers. England's attitude in 1904-5 showed that England was strongly inclined at that time to destroy the whole of Germany's position in the world with one war-like blow. This inclination for war is comprehensible, because a war contained no risk at all for England. The English Admiralty, however, hoped to render the beginnings of our naval enterprise worthless, by proceeding in 1905 to the building of the dreadnought class, on the assumption that the German navy would not be able to get ships of similar dimensions through the locks of the Kiel Canal.

This chain of political and naval threats, accompanied as it was by a wild agitation of public opinion,

created justifiable amazement in wide circles of Germany. On the one hand England's naval measures contained the admission that our fleet-building was being taken seriously. On the other hand the demand for our political humiliation, which had been going on for almost a decade, was now known, and the size of our fleet at that time was too small to explain such measures as the concentration of British squadrons in the North Sea. At the bottom of it all there was the clear intention of making us afraid, and if possible of nipping in the bud our impulse towards international independence.

In consequence of this I was besieged on all sides by requests for a big increase of Germany's naval power, for the purpose of preparing us better to meet British threats of war, and to teach the English a lesson in politics. Even the Emperor was strongly impressed in favour of a propaganda campaign to this end on the part of the Navy League, and wanted me to demand in the Reichstag that the period of life of our big ships should be reduced. This period of life had in consequence of a parliamentary misunderstanding been put twenty-five years higher in the Navy Bill than was the case with foreign navies, and resulted in a considerable number of our ships being obsolete.

In spite of this I resisted the introduction of such a Bill, and also handed in my resignation in this connection at the beginning of 1906. The Bill which I brought in in 1906, and which was immediately passed

by the Reichstag, contained only the six big cruisers which had been cancelled by the Reichstag in 1900, but immediately announced by me as a supplementary estimate for 1906. In addition I could not help asking the Reichstag for the increased financial means necessitated by the transition to the dreadnought class, which we were compelled to build, like all other navies of the world, by the English. And finally, the means had to be voted for the widening of the Kiel Canal which was rendered necessary by this increase in the size of the ships.

My restraint with regard to the pressure which was brought to bear upon me to demand more ships had a pacifying effect abroad and increased the confidence of the Reichstag. In the circumstances which prevailed during 1904-5, any increased demands would very probably have conjured up an immediate danger of war; and on the other hand would not have brought us any immediate gain, but would have proved too much for the navy to assimilate at the time. The aim which I had to keep in view, however, for technical and organizing reasons as well as reasons of political finance, was to build as steadily as possible. It proved to be most advantageous if we could lay down three big ships every year. This rate of building three ships per annum, the so-called "three-ship rate," was not provided for by the building programme of the Navy Bill. We therefore aimed at grafting Supplementary Bills on to the Navy Bill so as to stablize the three-ship rate. After 1906 the easiest way to do this was

to shorten the lives of our ships after the model of other navies, by accelerating the building of the new ones to replace them. However, if this was done the stabilization of the three-ship rate was only approximately accomplished; for in consequence of the original Navy Bill, the new vessels followed one another so closely for a number of years that sometimes four and sometimes two ships had to be laid down. This fluctuation in the rate of building was one of the blemishes of a naval programme sanctioned by Parliament, but one which had to be taken in with the rest of its overwhelming advantages, for the Reichstag would never have accepted the three-ship rate in 1898-1900 whilst giving its imprimatur to the squadron principle.

The moment at which we had to demand the reduction of the life of a ship was the financial year 1908. After there had been a regular race between the Centrum and the Progressives for the adoption of a Supplementary Navy Bill in the summer of 1907, before we had actually decided upon the Bill at the Admiralty, our request went without any difficulty. For the first time the Progressives not only voted for the ships as such, but also for the principle of legal sanction.

This Supplementary Bill brought no increase in the number of ships provided by the Navy Bill, but a considerable rejuvenation, and consequently an increase in the fighting value, of the ships. The provision of new ships also accelerated the building of dread-

noughts, which had shaken the general faith in the older classes.

According to the Supplementary Bill of 1908, the building programme provided for the laying down of four ships annually for four years, 1908-11, and then two ships annually, 1912-17, whilst from 1917 onwards the three-ship rate became permanent. In order to prevent too long an extension of the two-ship period, which had serious objections from the point of view of shipbuilding and finance, we definitely made up our minds at the Admiralty to break the two-ship rate in 1915 or 1916 by slipping in one or two new ships which we should ask for in due course. This possible (but by no means settled) future demand would then have been the sole, and indeed extremely inconsiderable, extension of the fleet over the original navy scheme of 1900; for as I have already remarked, we only restored in 1906 the Bill of 1900, and in 1908 we did not increase the number of ships at all.

These departmental considerations, which I could not altogether spare the reader, in view of their foreign political significance, resulted therefore in the following scheme:

1. Neither in 1906 nor 1908 did we exceed the original navy scheme of 1900 which was known to the whole world.

2. The life of a ship which we agreed upon in 1908 corresponded to the general principle of all navies.

3. The main thing from our point of view was the three-ship rate, and even if four ships were built

every year for four years, on account of the large number of obsolete ships left over from the previous period, this was balanced by a succeeding period in which only two ships at most were built every year.

In spite of this existing state of affairs, the shorter life of our ships, and probably more still the fact that we were also able to build dreadnoughts, promised our navy such a considerable increase in fighting value that the British experts, with Admiral Fisher at their head, began to look askance at our Supplementary Bill. We had never hoped for British approval during the creation of our sea-power. The navy scare, however, which Fisher now set going, offended in our opinion against good manners in international relations, because the Admiralty and many members of the Cabinet did not hesitate to stir up their country with exaggerated and wittingly false statements regarding our building programme.[1] Chance so willed it that the English only laid down four ships in that very year. The British Government exploited this fact to make palatable to the public the laying down of four extra ships, *i.e.* eight dreadnoughts altogether in 1909. They made good use of the trick of

[1] In the spring of 1909 the foolish story was circulated that we were secretly building beyond the sums provided for in the Estimates. This untruth, which testified to a complete ignorance of our Constitution, was repeated by Asquith, the First Lord of the Admiralty, McKenna, and others in Parliament for several years, in spite of our repeated *démentis*. Winston Churchill formally abandoned this dishonest procedure when he declared in his first public speech as First Lord of the Admiralty (November 9th, 1911) that he was glad to be able to testify that the statements of the German Minister regarding the naval programme are absolutely confirmed by events.

comparing the German fleet as it would be in 1920, with the British fleet as it was in 1908. The British taxpayer, who could not be so clearly aware of the actual overwhelming superiority of the British fleet as the British Admiralty, was filled with uneasiness by an official and press agitation as unscrupulous as they were clever, and he was thus rendered willing to make further financial sacrifices. Fear of invasion, and a nervous dread of German warships, Zeppelins, and spies, began to permeate English society and the masses of the people.

The German Ambassador in London, Count Wolff-Metternich, watched this increasing fear of Germany with growing anxiety. Until then he had taken up the right standpoint that the English must, and would accustom themselves to our Navy Bill. Time has shown that even our four-ship rate, which lasted for four years, did not constitute a *casus belli* for England. War, with its incalculable possibilities, seemed to them too serious an affair, and well-informed men in London were quite clear in their own minds that it would have been perfect madness politically, militarily, and economically for us to attack England. In the spring of 1909 Admiral Fisher even admitted quite frankly to our naval attaché that the navy scare was nothing more than one of the usual manœuvres to prepare Parliament and the nation for the acceptance of bigger Naval Estimates. The consequent perversion of British public opinion, and the growing influence of the bellicose Northcliffe press, had to be

accepted by us into the bargain, as a regrettable but not a decisive evil. The anti-German agitation constituted as little a *casus belli* for us as our fleet-building for the British Cabinet, and in contrast to the *Germaniam esse delendam* of former years it represented a certain progress towards the securing of peace, for the British public to feel that Germany too was not unarmed. At the same time, however, it was hoped to make us fearful of our own courage by means of a loud outcry, and to prejudice us against our fleet, which was in itself the surest sign that we had taken the right path.

It is understandable if not quite excusable that Count Metternich should, under the strong pressure of English circles around him in 1908, begin to lose his sure judgment of the deeper-lying reasons of Anglo-German jealousy. It is understandable because a unanimous chorus of English opinion insisted that the German fleet-building alone was to blame for the straining of the good relations between the two countries. It is not quite excusable, because Count Metternich could and must have known the previous history of the Anglo-German tension during the period when we had no fleet, and on the other hand because he could and must have been convinced by the whole situation and the relative strength of both navies of the purely defensive line of our naval policy. But it is thoroughly German to be convinced by the enemy that the latter is really right; the German is unsurpassed in his capacity for seeing the other party's point of view, but finds

it extremely difficult to fathom his opponent's real motives.

The reports of our London Ambassador caused Prince Bülow to enter into detailed discussions with me during the winter of 1908-9. Since January, 1909, I had declared my readiness, during the course of these conferences with the Chancellor, to allow the English Government to be informed by us that we would be permanently satisfied with a proportionate adjustment of the strength of the two fleets, which would allow a definite superiority to the British fleet for all time. As a starting-point for negotiations I first mentioned the proportion of 3 : 4, but later declared myself ready to accept the proportion of 2 : 3, and finally settled on the proportion of 10 : 16. This figure was ultimately proposed by the British Admiralty under Winston Churchill and was straightway accepted by me. Even though Churchill left himself certain back doors open which really guaranteed the English navy a greater superiority than 16 to 10, I passed them over in my conviction that the systematic completion of the Navy Bill would fulfil its defensive purpose, which was all we had ever aimed at.

The arrangement of a proportion between the two navies gave the British Admiralty actual proof that we did not intend on principle to build a fleet for offensive purposes. According to the views of all authorities on the science of naval warfare the numerical superiority, which under otherwise equal conditions gives the attacker at sea the probability of success, is

about 30 per cent. We conceded this advantage and considerably more to the English. We could not have given a more binding guarantee that offensive intentions were far removed from our minds.

It was clear, however, that the English preferred us to have not even a fleet which was 50 or even 100 per cent. weaker than theirs. On the one hand naval history, accidentally perhaps, provides numerous examples of the ability of the weaker fleet to win, if special conditions and the luck of battle are favourable to it. But by far the most important point about the German fleet from a political standpoint was the international alliance-value which it gave the German Empire; and even though Germany's alliance-policy had allowed itself to be pushed into the background by British diplomacy these conditions might yet change one day. Thus we could only obtain recognition from England by abandoning the building of the fleet altogether. The untiring efforts of British diplomacy were consequently aimed during these years at sickening us of the fleet, and at picking holes in the Navy Bill, if possible, in order to wreck it.

The fundamental error which was at the root of Bethmann-Hollweg's naval ideas was the belief that certain concessions in the development of our fleet, little courtesies, so to speak, which we showed the English in naval affairs, might alter the fundamental and political formation of our relations. A few ships more or less were all the same to the English. The reasons for their malevolence lay far deeper than the

discussion of the annual Naval Estimates which they kept going with masterly skill. Bethmann-Hollweg seemed to agree with me that the Navy Bill, the foundation of all our prospects in world-politics, must be preserved untouched. I for my part agreed with the Chancellor that everything must be done by us to effect an improvement in our relations with England. From the first days of his taking office, I supported the Chancellor in his endeavours to meet the English in various matters brought forward by them. In particular, I influenced the Emperor in this direction, and for my part I left nothing undone to keep in motion the negotiations regarding a naval agreement suggested in 1908.

In the course of these conversations, which were first carried on by private negotiators and often greatly delayed by the English, I received the impression, all the more strongly as time went on, that the English Government was not serious about a real naval understanding, but that it was only engaged in infusing more deeply into our Foreign Office belief in the legend that the German fleet was to blame for everything and that without it the Germans would be sure of a paradise on earth. It went to work in this matter with undeniable skill, as anyone will testify who has had experience of the mentality of our Foreign Office at that time and the Chancellor's inability to understand the political psychology of England. Our ambassador in London, von Kühlmann, was one of the principal supporters of the idea that German ambi-

tions for world power might go hand in hand with those of England were it not for the obstacle of the German fleet.

It was proved later that the English government did not seriously wish to arrive at an understanding on a comparative rate of shipbuilding because our consent to English demands bore no results whatever.[1]

Above all, the real basis for any such understanding, limitation of naval shipbuilding by adherence to the numerical proportion that has already been mentioned, was only recognized by them in 1913, although Lloyd George had held out prospects of such a recognition years before. It was believed and openly stated by those in Germany most concerned that war with England was not to be feared on account of our fleet, but that danger of such a war would diminish yearly as the German fleet rose in the estimation of the English, and thereby made the prospects of war seem less safe even to the Jingo party. Rude utterances, such as those of the *Saturday Review* and Civil Lord of the Admiralty Lee were heard less frequently. After 1912 there grew up, especially in London, a tendency towards more businesslike treatment of relations between Germany and England. One instance of this was the Anglo-German colonial treaty which was ready to be signed in 1914.

[1]Among such demands may be mentioned the suggestion that German ship-building be inspected by the British naval attaché at Berlin, and British ship-building by the German naval attaché at London. I obtained the Emperor's consent to this plan with difficulty, but presented it to him in order that we might escape the odium of being the first to refuse.

III

The one real crisis between Germany and England during the years from 1904 until 1914 occurred in the summer of 1911, and was due to the manner in which the German Foreign Office tried to settle the Moroccan dispute then pending between France and us. The Foreign Secretary of State at that time, von Kiderlen-Wächter, lacked political insight, particularly as regards the English. Moreover, he did much harm by his slovenly methods of business. It was at his suggestion that on July 1st, 1911, the Chancellor dispatched the gunboat *Panther* to the Moroccan port of Agadir; and it was his fault that the British Government, which had demanded an explanation, was left in doubt and without an answer for several weeks. As a result Lloyd George delivered a speech on July 21st that had been prepared by the Cabinet which warned Germany that in case of a challenge she would find British power on the side of France.

As I was just starting my summer holiday trip I received unofficial information of the dispatch of the *Panther*. That the naval minister should not be consulted in a naval affair of such world-wide importance betrayed certainly a lack of organization in the government. I was clear in my mind from the first minute that this demonstration on the Atlantic was a political blunder, and I was strengthened in my belief when I learned that England had not been consulted. If Kiderlen thought it was necessary to

make a military demonstration he should have made it on land and directed it exclusively against the French. Personally, I should have been against such a demonstration on principle. A flag is easily hoisted, but it is often a difficult matter to lower even a small one with honour. We did not desire to make war. The greatest mistake of our government, however, lay in keeping its intentions dark during the first weeks of July. Later Kiderlen gave assurances that the Chancellor had never for a moment thought of demanding territory in Morocco. But as these assurances followed Lloyd George's threatening speech it looked as if he had only drawn back before the raised sword of England. Our prestige all over the world received a blow, and even German public opinion was stirred by the impression that we had received a set-back. "England stopped Germany," was the catch-word of the press everywhere.

It was our first diplomatic reverse since Bismarck's administration, and it hit us all the harder because the structure of our position in the world was founded not so much on power as on prestige. At the time of Delcassé's dismissal (1905), prestige had proved effectual; but we now had proof that prestige by itself was a failing asset. If we kept silent in face of this rebuff we inflamed the "new spirit" of readiness for war on the part of France, and laid ourselves open to still greater humiliation at the next opportunity. Therefore it was unwise, as the government tried to do, to palliate the slap in the face we had

received. We should have admitted it openly and taken prompt measures to reply in kind. For a state which is conscious that the welfare of its citizens rests not on glossing over humiliating experiences but on the prestige that is backed up by real power, there is only one means, after such an incident as the Agadir affair, of restoring its prestige:—to show that it is not afraid, and at the same time strengthen its defences in the face of an increased possibility of war. It was our duty to follow Bismarck's example in similar cases, and bring in a Defence Bill quietly and without irritating accompaniments.

With such an idea in mind I went to Berlin in the autumn and told the Chancellor that as we had suffered a diplomatic check it ought to be counter-balanced by a supplementary naval bill. The Chancellor not only denied that we had met with a check, but complained indignantly to the Chief of Naval Cabinet because such an expression should be used. Moreover, he feared, as a possible result of such a supplementary bill, war with England.

The supplementary bill which I had considered did not call for a decided increase in our fleet, but aimed at improving its preparedness for war. The weak point in our naval defence lay in the annual autumn arrival of recruits, which, coupled with our short term of service, paralysed the striking power of the fleet for a certain period of the year. A means of increasing our preparedness for war without at the same time making a considerable addition to the number

of ships was to put a reserve squadron on active service, so that in future we could have three instead of two squadrons permanently in service. Through the ability thus acquired of leaving a crew on the same ship almost interruptedly during its term of service we simplified greatly the complicated business of living quarters on shipboard, and set the officers and petty officers free for more important tasks and for sea voyaging on a large scale. A greater consideration of the *personnel* who had been wearing themselves out in strenuous service under unfavourable conditions was necessary in order to preserve the necessary energy in those who were ambitious and wanted to rise. This reform made it necessary to build only three additional large ships within the next twenty years, and attained a vital improvement in the navy with a very slight outlay. No one cognizant of British policy could possibly believe she would be stirred up to war by an increase of three ships in twenty years, unless she had already made up her mind to go to war. Our ambassador, Count Metternich, agreed with me that danger of war was very slight. But from 1909 until towards the end of the World War, lack of real discernment has been the characteristic of our foreign policy. For this reason the struggle between Imperial bureaucracy and the reform of the fleet arose because we feared we might provoke England to war. We could not have givn the English a more welcome line to follow.

The Agadir and Congo negotiations were plausibly

interpreted by the Foreign Office as diplomatic successes, although the resignation of Colonial Minister von Lindquist and other unpleasant incidents disputed such a complacent point of view. I consented to withhold the Supplementary Bill for a time in order not to render the negotiations that were proceeding more difficult for the government. The Emperor, too, who without any knowledge in advance had begun to uphold in public the re-enforcement of the fleet, decided on the advice of the Chancellor, in the beginning of October, upon postponement. To make a political impression the Defence Bill should have been presented at the beginning of the autumn session, and might then have prevented the Morocco debate (in November) which further impaired our prestige. Such a debate ought to have been avoided altogether. But the course this debate took made hesitation impossible, in my opinion, both as regarded home and foreign policy. Now was the time to declare what we intended to do and would do, all the more because England, after the settlement of the Morocco question, could not make the Supplementary Bill a *casus belli*.[1]

[1] From a purely departmental point of view I could stand a year's postponement of the Bill. I must here mention a third advantage which this Bill possessed, besides improved readiness for war service and freeing of the training personnel,—namely, the interruption of the two ship rate. If the two ship rate, as settled in 1908, were continued uninterruptedly for six years, there would suddenly be needed in 1918 an increased sum of sixty million marks in consequence of the three-ship rate which would then recommence. As a result, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1918 compelled us to defray the entire extra expenditure by taxation, we might on account of the financial

On November 14th, the Emperor commanded the Chancellor to include the Supplementary Bill in the Budget of 1912. Bethmann declared his willingness to do so, to me, but apparently left himself a loophole. He next urged the Minister of War to bring an Army Bill into the background, and then he pleaded the coming Reichstag elections as an excuse for publishing the Budget minus the Navy Bill. From the point of view of domestic politics this amounted to a surrender of the Bill, and from the foreign political point of view, after all that had gone before, it lowered our prestige still further. In the beginning of January, Kühlmann sent a message from London in which that most unhappy diplomat erroneously stated that the success of the pending understanding with England in regard to colonial possessions depended on the abandonment of the Supplementary Bill. Later, he was equally mistaken in 1916 when he prophesied a declaration of war by Holland, and thereby influenced the decision of the Imperial Government in

condition of the Empire have been placed in a nice predicament. For this reason, bridging over to the three-ship rate by alternating with the two-ship rate was of the greatest value in the period between 1912-1917. But I did not need the Supplementary Bill for the budget of 1912. Another need of the navy which I advocated in 1911 was that large cruisers be given preference in our building programme, and this measure would have added to our war strength because the English were behindhand in building ships of this very type. Bethmann's opposition, however, forced me to withdraw this measure so that I might at least put through the more important part of my plans. By forcing me to abandon this measure,—a regrettable act from a military point of view,—before Haldane came to Germany, and then neglecting to turn this action of his to account in the course of the negotiations with Haldane, the Chancellor absolutely threw away a very effective weapon.

the U-boat question. In this same month of January the Chancellor, without consulting me, proposed to the Emperor that the Supplementary Bill be laid before the Reichstag not in statutory form but as a yearly grant.

When the Emperor refused, the Chancellor fell back on the demand that the formation of the third squadron should be made gradually and that the building rate until 1917 should only include a third ship every other year.

I was already placed at such a disadvantage by the many disappointments I had met, which were accompanied by acts of financial and political finesse on the part of the Secretary of Finance, Heermuth, that I acquiesced in the modifications demanded by the Chancellor, but I demanded in return that no further changes be proposed. The Chancellor evaded a direct promise. On January 13th, 1912, I requested the Emperor to come to a decision which should put an end to this backing and filling and wrangling, so harmful both at home and abroad, which, with the best will in the world, could not be concealed. The Emperor thereupon commanded the Chancellor to declare his opinion of the Bill fully and freely; and the Chancellor again tried to gain time by not coming to a final decision. On January 25th, the Navy Bill was ready, and on February 7th was announced in a speech by the Emperor the day after the English Minister of War, Haldane, who had been invited by the Imperial Government, arrived in Berlin. This was

a new phenomenon in the opposition of inner political circles to the necessary improvement of our naval equipment, this arrival of a foreign competitor. What were the preliminary deliberations precedent to inviting this British statesman to Berlin are unknown to me.

IV

As I was kept quite in the dark by the Chancellor as to his aims and expectations, it was only during the course of these negotiations with Haldane, and especially from their London sequel that I was able to understand clearly the attitude of the English cabinet at the time. Kiderlen's careless neglect was followed by Lloyd George's heavy counter-blow, and this, in my opinion, was followed by an undignified attitude on our part. Our assiduous courtesy produced in England the feeling that they could do what they liked with us. If we asked the English to Berlin we must be prepared to sacrifice something to spare ourselves the further embarrassment of a fruitless invitation. Bethmann's reluctance to uphold the Supplementary Bill in the Reichstag gave the English the cue to our weak spot, and showed them how they might even confuse the whole scheme of fleet construction as well as widen the breach within the Imperial Government. So the English accepted the invitation. Sir Edward Grey's confidant, the Minister of War, Haldane, who on account of his skill in reconnaissance, exhibited on the Russian General Staff

in 1906, was also considered very acceptable to Germany, was sent to Berlin with the purpose of disgusting us as much as possible with the Supplementary Bill, and indeed with the whole scheme of fleet construction. As they recognized the Chancellor as an ally, and as Haldane moreover did not come as a petitioner but as a guest, there was no need for the British Cabinet to furnish him with offers to us that were seriously meant. Nevertheless Haldane brought with him a pretended present, of which more later. In spite of the open opposition of the Chancellor to the Supplementary Bill, which had already greatly impaired its value in foreign eyes, this Bill still afforded an adequate means, by skilful negotiation, of reaching an understanding on the basis of real give and take, even although there was not much inclination on the part of the English to negotiate with us as equals.

On the 4th of February the Emperor had informed the Foreign Office privately that Germany was ready to meet England halfway on the question of the Navy Supplementary Bill, provided she could at the same time receive sufficient guarantees of a friendly policy on the part of England, so that both powers might agree to take no part in any combination or military entanglement directed against each other. Such an agreement would at the same time make possible an understanding as to expenditures for armaments.

For the negotiations with Haldane himself the Emperor laid down the following principles:

1. The Navy Supplementary Bill is to be retained for the present.

2. England is to declare what programme she will follow (*a*) with regard to the Supplementary Bill, (*b*) with regard to the existing naval programme.

3. Discussion of a German-British alliance or a treaty for mutual neutrality, in connection with which the German Supplementary Bill might be retarded.

4. A demand that England give up the proportionate strength of 2 : 1, the "two keel to one standard," in favour of a proportionate standard agreeable to Germany.

The Chancellor was directed to ascertain whether Haldane had been authorized by his government to enter into preliminary negotiations or whether he came in a more or less private capacity to feel his way. As this question was answered the Chancellor was to speak in the name of the Emperor or merely as a private individual expressing his own views. In addition, the Emperor warned him not to play our trump card too soon, and to lay stress on the right of every state to decide upon its own defensive power. Finally, until we had obtained a promise of English concessions, progress of the Navy Bill must not in any way be retarded.

Just because we were disposed to take a compliant attitude, we should, in my opinion, if we wished to accomplish anything, assume an attitude of reserve, all the more because Haldane, an able and extremely clever lawyer, belonged to the class of British states-

men who considered it an easy matter to hoodwink our politicians. From some papers abstracted from the entourage of the British statesman we are in possession of accounts of the hour and a half conference which Bethmann held with Haldane on the afternoon of February 8th.[1]

If these are correct, the Chancellor assured the British Minister of his continuous endeavours to come to an understanding with England, and displayed an unofficial inclination, yielding to Haldane's suggestion, to distribute the building of ships called for by the Supplementary Bill over a number of years. In return he proposed an agreement for neutrality by both nations under certain conditions. Haldane evaded this proposal, and emphasized the "unconditional loyalty of Great Britain towards the entente with France and Russia," and, according to his report, called the Chancellor's attention to England's military duties in behalf of France, Belgium, etc., in the case of certain eventualities. Further, he warned the Chancellor against a German Supplementary Bill which England would be compelled to reply to with a "two keels to one" standard. He did not, as has been stated, consent to any agreement for neutrality, and the utmost he would offer was a noncommittal promise to undertake no "unprovoked attacks." Thus Haldane adhered to the traditional policy of England towards us.

[1] *The Vindication of Great Britain* and the *Manchester Guardian*. While correcting the proofs of this book a third version has been sent to me from an issue of the *Daily Chronicle* translated into German.

At this preliminary conference the Chancellor's mistake lay in disclosing the contents of the Supplementary Bill, including the changes which he himself wished to make, to Lord Haldane. Had he only chosen the original Bill as a basis for negotiations, he would have left a far greater means of compensation in our hands. But to emphasize his own pacific desires, Bethmann considered it advisable in conversation with the Englishman to side against the departmental representatives of German defensive power, those "naval fellows." This course produced an excellent impression on Haldane and made it easier for him to widen the breach in the German government revealed by the Chancellor, and also to conjure up a fictitious "war party" against which the Chancellor was to contend.

On February 9th Haldane was received by the Emperor, who had wished to be present at the conference originally planned for Haldane and myself. The audience was preceded by a luncheon at which the Chancellor was also present. While we did not talk politics at lunch, a decided air of tension prevailed. When I entered, the Chancellor asked me not to mention a fleet building programme in the proportion of two to three. Why he did so I do not know; perhaps he did not consider the plan sufficiently favourable for England. I was not informed by the Chancellor as to any part of the negotiations, particularly the proposal for mutual neutrality. Before the audience that followed, Bethmann retired.

During this audience my part was chiefly that of a witness, as the Emperor himself led the conversation. At first Haldane declared that he spoke in the name of the British Cabinet and with the consent of the King, while toward the end of the conference he contradicted himself and said that he was present merely in a private capacity.[1]

Haldane began by holding out to us the prospect of a great African Empire. Although the Emperor, as late as January, had regarded such colonial offers with deep and justifiable distrust, it had proved possible in a few weeks to excite his ambition by the prospect of very valuable acquisitions to the Empire. But he did not stop to consider the difficulties that lay in the way of such a tempting prospect. The generous offer of colonial possessions, which, by the way, the English neither possessed nor had the right to dispose of, was artfully calculated to take advantage of the Emperor's disposition. This offer, so crude and obvious, made a painful impression on me. Once before, in 1908, England had tried to tempt us by offering the Portuguese colonies, while at the same time they stiffened the determination of the Portuguese not to sell. In the present case the acquisition not only of Portuguese, but also of French and Belgian territory was discussed. By such a scheme England planned not only to keep us in leading strings but to furnish proof to the French

[1] The *Manchester Guardian* of Sept. 1st, 1917, said that Haldane had previously received full instructions from the Cabinet. He was not to negotiate as to a treaty, but he might talk and entangle us as he thought best and report the course of events to the Cabinet.

and Belgians of our ambitions, and thereby strengthen their dependence upon her.[1]

I certainly admired Haldane when, during the drawing up of these provisional and very dubious schemes, he modestly remarked that he "only claimed the Cape to Cairo line as England's share." This meant Africa for England! When the ultimate superiority in power was added to the English skill in negotiation, woe betide Germany! Haldane makes me think of the words of the American who said to a German admiral that when he compared the leading statesmen of England and Germany whom he knew, and put them opposite one another at a conference table, he would be surprised if we still retained Potsdam at the end of the negotiations.

For my part I began by declaring that I would welcome an understanding. When in the course of the conversation Haldane designated the two-power standard as the British tradition, I proposed an ar-

[1] With reference to Portugal compare the declaration of the Prime Minister on March 20, 1912. That the scheme of the Entente was a question of rousing Belgian distrust of us instead of satisfying German colonial ambitions was proved by the French Ambassador at Berlin in April, 1914. The German Government, in their desire to come to an understanding with the Western Powers, and particularly with England, had hesitated between sacrificing the fleet or the colonial plans. During the astonishing conversation held at the time mentioned above with Jagow, he disclosed to the French representative his private opinion that Germany, France and England should economically develop the Belgian Congo. Cambon, the French Ambassador, immediately rejected such an idea emphatically, and made good use of Jagow's naïveté by egging on Belgium against Germany. Perhaps he remembered Bismarck's masterly turning to account of the far greater blunder of Benedetti in regard to that same Belgium.

rangement in the sense of a proportion between the two fleets of 2 : 3; that is, I offered what Lloyd George and later Winston Churchill had proposed. Haldane rejected this politely; England had to be equal with her fleet to any possible combination. When I returned that our army must in that case also be equal to any combination, although it was hardly so strong in numbers as either of the two neighbouring Powers, Haldane replied that that was quite a different matter. He did not propose a naval concession on our part as a necessity which he demanded, but he opined that the spirit of the whole agreement would be bound to suffer by the Supplementary Estimates. He next came out with a proposal of a certain delay in the building of the three ships, whether we could not distribute them over three years? I tried to make clear to him the difficulties which a further change in the Bill would occasion us, as we had already reduced our programme considerably out of regard for conciliatory feeling in England. During the negotiations it seemed to me right on principle, only to yield so far as was unavoidable, because it was always possible for us to give more ground. I also represented that Haldane must remember how His Majesty was bound by the Speech from the Throne. Haldane admitted this, and inferred that our system of service necessitated a third squadron in commission. Demands with respect to the commissioning of ships and the *personnel* of the fleet were matters of indifference to England. He only wanted a token of our readiness to meet England, more for the

sake of form—for he was not concerned with expenditure.[1] Ought I then to have been satisfied with offering the prospect of a general naval *rapprochement* in the event of a political agreement, or was it more correct to define the limit of our *rapprochement* in this interview? I took the latter course when Haldane himself proposed that we should retard the rate of our increase "in order to lubricate the negotiations," or that we should at least cancel the first of the three ships. He outlined in writing of his own accord the same proposal which I had previously fixed upon in my own mind as a possible concession. I therefore sacrificed the ship.

I would have sacrificed the whole Bill for a really solid agreement of neutrality, as I had let the Emperor know beforehand. All through these years I was fully conscious of the grave responsibility, and I always had before my eyes the possibility of making concessions as far as naval armament was concerned (for I had never considered this as an end in itself) in return for real international equality and for the freedom of the seas. This peaceful purpose of our fleet-building was considerably nearer to its fulfilment two years later, as Churchill's consent to the 10:16 formula showed. But at the beginning of 1912 when our fleet was weaker than it was two years afterwards, I could not know exactly how great was the possibility of a political agreement. The Chancellor had never said

[1] The Supplementary Estimates meant an increase of only nine millions per annum.

to me plainly: "this and that is the concrete objective which we want to attain." When working with him one was always groping more or less in the dark, and so I gave away the third ship against my real principles and without any return, so as not to obstruct negotiations which could possibly promise success.

Owing to the fact that the Chancellor had already given away the *original* Supplementary Estimates, I had no more compensations to offer in return for little gifts, which were paid out to the tune of future colonies. I could only sacrifice military values on principle in return for actual, and in a certain sense final, guarantees, either naval (the proportion of 2 : 3), or political (an agreement regarding neutrality). To have dropped Supplementary Estimates without any positive compensation would have meant giving way in too one-sided a fashion. This was just what we had to avoid most of all if we did not want to return to the period of English threats such as in 1896 or 1904-5, or to put an eternal screw upon ourselves. We had to deal with the English on the basis of like to like, if we wanted to secure permanently our mutual relations in spite of the mistakes made in July, 1911.

I was therefore uncertain whether I had not already gone too far in reality, in sacrificing as a proof of our compliance a part of the Supplementary Estimates which had already been reduced. My doubts were soon dissolved by my seeing clearly the real aims of the English. For after Haldane had pocketed this

concession without giving anything in return, and had declared himself satisfied with it, he went farther and cautiously touched upon the question as to whether the Navy Bill itself had to be carried into effect. Here the Emperor intervened and so Haldane withdrew his feeler. In spite of this I still felt certain that the real desires of the English were not directed against the bagatelle of the three supplementary ships, but against the Bill itself. Haldane admitted on various occasions during the conversation that the increase of the fleet by the three supplementary ships did not materially matter. After we had apparently achieved unanimity, and sacrifices had only been made on Germany's side, Haldane declared, as I said, that the whole thing was a private affair. Although the later negotiations in London came to nothing, I kept to the sacrifice of the one ship so as to leave no doubt about our good-will.

A really businesslike deal with Haldane was rendered difficult by the presence of the Emperor. When the conversation turned upon the point that was decisive for us, the political agreement, Haldane evaded it: a neutrality clause, he said, would not be possible on account of England's relations with France.

As we left the Castle, Haldane expressed himself satisfied with the conversation. I had deduced from it, (1) that the Supplementary Bill was actually immaterial to England, but that her real object was to cripple the development of our fleet, and (2) that *no* agreement was offered by the English which would

have meant an honest naval understanding on the basis of the proportion suggested by Lloyd George in 1908. Rather was the "two-keels-to-one" standard, which took all the value out of our fleet, to be rigidly recognized by us on principle, and this would be equivalent in the long run to a reduction in our Navy Bill. If we accepted the "two-keels-to-one" standard, then England could content herself with building four or even three ships for a succession of years, and curtail our own programme by two or one and a half ships per annum according to agreement. This would be an end of the Navy Bill; apart from this, the principle of our naval speculation cited above would be killed, and our fleet would lose its justification for existence and Germany her international alliance-value. They thought that they could expect us to give way in this fashion because we were apparently urging so strongly for an "understanding" at any price. I deduced further, (3) that Bethmann's formula of neutrality did not come into question, but (4) that our naval subjection was to be rewarded solely by reversions in the African possessions of the English *protégés,* French, Belgians, and Portuguese; these reversions were calculated to suit the Emperor's imagination and the desire of various diplomats to achieve a success.

Haldane did not therefore proceed on strictly business lines: he tried first of all mock negotiations, ready to sugar our subjection and to grant us the appearance of a political agreement and the acquisition of colonies,

if we practically entered into a vassalage in return for this.

England's real face was revealed a little more clearly by Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who on February 9th, at the same moment that Haldane was descending the steps of the Castle at Berlin with the bronze bust given him by the Emperor under his arm, made the luncheon speech in Glasgow in which he described the German fleet as a luxury.

So long as the idea of a luxury fleet prevailed, and so long as the proportion of 2 : 3, once proposed by Lloyd George, was rejected by the English Cabinet, it was, considering the mentality of our Government, useless, and produced only diplomatic disadvantages, for us to invite British Ministers to Berlin, who offered us nothing, but skilfully sowed discord among us.

If Haldane had shown any inclination towards a reasonable and proportionate arrangement of the fleets, I was prepared to say to him: when the proportion of 2 : 3 is once established and a solid friendship has taken root between our countries, then the time will have come to discuss a proportionate reduction of the Navy Bill itself. The procedure of the English statesman, however, which aimed at deceiving our illusionists and not at a square deal, naturally made me keep back this idea, which could only be properly accepted when England recognized our position in the world and offered us tangible compensations. If it was at all possible to bring England to serious negotiations instead of to

this mockery, this could only be done by steadfastness in the main issue, the Navy Bill.

What deductions did the Chancellor make from the failure of his attempt at an understanding which had failed to realize the soul of England from the very outset, and had been based upon unreal premises? He looked round for a whipping-boy and of course found me at once, because I did not give up the German fleet blindly without any compensation.

As to the final conversation which Haldane had with the Chancellor on February 10th, the report published in *The Manchester Guardian,* says: "Haldane was interested mainly in the navy question, and his whole argument throughout, that a political understanding remained unreal so long as Germany did not make some concessions in her fleet, did not help the Chancellor's depression, who was decided, however, if he could do anything at all, not to let the idea of an understanding with England be wrecked by Tirpitz."

I leave the reader to examine this plea in connection with my version of Haldane's conversation with me as I have reported it; it follows from this latter that my naval concession was absolutely uncompensated, and that Haldane himself did not treat the Supplementary Estimates as vital. Even with the Chancellor, Haldane seems therefore to have aimed ultimately at the collapse of our Navy Bill.

The negotiations were then continued in London. Their course showed more and more clearly that Eng-

land was only engaged in making us give one-sided concessions in the construction of our fleet without receiving anything in return. The Foreign Office could not expect to complete this one-sided subjection, and now urged me to drop all the three supplementary ships. This demand was equal to the abandonment of the whole of the Supplementary Estimates, for we could not then ask for the *personnel,* since the whole justification of these Estimates became illogical once the ships were dropped. The Foreign Office did not take into account that apart from the weakness incurred militarily by the stoppage of this reform, and especially after the Emperor had come to an agreement with Lord Haldane, the result was an unwarrantable loss of prestige, and that we had started down a slope on which there was no stopping. The further history of the sufferings of the Supplementary Bill, which cannot be related here in detail, showed that our diplomacy allowed itself to be brought more and more to the standpoint that England really had the right to determine the limits of our armament. The Emperor's firmness finally suppressed any suggestion that the Supplementary Bill, which had been solemnly announced in a speech from the Throne, should be dropped without any concessions on the part of the English. The Chancellor must have felt, in view of the course which this affair had taken, that our representative in London was not equal to his task, for our ambassador there was relieved by the best diplomatist we possessed, Freiherr von Marschall.

V

Although very anxious about the improvement of Anglo-German relations, Prince Bülow preserved Germany's dignity completely in 1908-9. On the other hand the negotiations adopted by us in 1912 called forth a domineering attitude towards us, which they abandoned, however, quite correctly when they noticed that it was not our intention to accept subjection. The improvement which was so perceptible in Anglo-German relations after this turn of events in 1912 induced even Bethmann and Kühlmann to declare frankly during the pre-war period that my standpoint had been correct. Statements to this effect by both statesmen were reported to me. On April 23rd, 1914, the Chancellor had a conversation with the Ambassador von Wangenheim, in the early morning before he left Corfu, the contents of which were given by the latter to a companion in a form which was handed on farther in an official report drawn up on the same day. According to this the Chancellor said: "There is no question that Tirpitz's policy in 1911-12 was the right one, and that we owe our present promising relationship to England to this naval policy alone. I myself was unable to estimate it as such at the time, but I now acknowledge Tirpitz's standpoint." Even in July, 1914, Bethmann showed by his attitude that he saw in me an instrument of peace. Then when the misfortune of July, 1914, arose from reasons which were very remote from the German fleet, Bethmann-Hollweg, to

be sure, slipped back into his "whipping-boy" theory of 1912 and received ample applause; this proceeded from the English on the one hand, who as they did not want the war, according to their own assertion, had to distort the matter and stamp me as a war agitator, and on the other hand from German democracy, which is glad after the result of the war solemnly to abjure the understanding they showed from 1900 to 1914 of Germany's need of foundations of power. I shall not deny myself the insertion of the following sample of contemporary German history-writing. The *Frankfürter Zeitung* writes, 1918, No. 330: "Was not Lord Haldane in Berlin, and did he not propose a treaty which would only have left us a *moderate distance* behind the English fleet? Bethmann did not accept this proposal, and we know well why. Not because he did not want to do so himself, nor because he had not recognized that this solution was wholly sufficient for Germany's justified interests, but because he was miserably afraid of Tirpitz and his journalistic companions, of the impudent, criminal propaganda which the Admiralty was carrying on at the expense of the German taxpayer." The low-mindedness that, apart from the untruth, speaks out of such press utterances, which unhappily are not isolated, relieves England of the trouble of producing the proof of her generosity and of German roguery. In reality it so happened that Haldane's proposal amounted to the abandonment of the German Navy Bill, and I heard from the *Frankfürter Zeitung* for the first time the incorrect opinion

that the Chancellor also recognized this abandonment of the Navy Bill to be sufficient for Germany's justified interests. I must therefore have been the departmental goat which had frustrated Haldane's honest attempt at reconciliation.[1]

Is Germany really doing well for her own sake to allow all those people to be defamed who once laboured for her safety and protection?

From its own standpoint the *Frankfürter Zeitung* is justified in asking why the Chancellor did not decide to let me go, if my activities were so fatal (I made it very easy for him in 1911-12 and several times offered the Emperor my resignation) or refuse his responsible counter-signature.

For my part I put one question to those Germans who assume that the English did not go to war to maintain the continental balance of power or for reasons of the old trade jealousy, but for the sake of Germany's naval policy. Do they think that the Supple-

[1] The tendency of the book inspired by Haldane, *The Vindication,* to construct a peace party (Bethmann) and a war party (Bülow, the Crown Prince, and myself) and the desire to draw the Emperor over to Bethmann's side probably explains a misstatement in the book, that the Emperor had cancelled the third ship "against the wishes of his Admiral." In reality, the conversation went so that I asked Haldane, "What do you mean by lubrication?" He mentioned the reduction of the Supplementary Estimates and wrote it down himself. I replied, "We can accept that." Hereupon the Emperor agreed. Haldane's historical error was explained by an evil conscience: in order to get rid of England's blame for the war he had to invent a war-party in Berlin. It is not worth while discussing the perverted version in *The Manchester Guardian.* I remained silent with regard to Haldane's publications in 1916-17, because I had to leave the reply to the Emperor at that time.

mentary Bill of 1912 or the completion of the Navy Bill would have matured a resolve to make war?

The first possibility practically settled itself. If England preferred peace on principle before 1912 she would hardly have changed round to war owing to the two ships of the Supplementary Bill. Or would England perhaps have not used the situation that had arisen in July, 1914, as a *casus belli,* and not have defended Belgium and France if I had abandoned all three supplementary ships instead of one and had purchased a diplomatic defeat into the bargain? If, however, England was resolved to go to war on my account, then it would be simpler to bring a reproach against me for conceding anything at all, and thus making me to a certain extent an accomplice of those of our Ministers who did harm to our armaments on land and sea by an inexcusable policy of economy during the years preceding the war, and consequently helped to lose the war. The sole question therefore—and the answer to it is, to be sure, more a matter of opinion—is whether we ought to have decided upon and put into execution any Naval Bill at all. It is useless quarrelling with those people who preferred that German overseas trade should wither in peace, rather than make an attempt to protect is by a "balance-of-power" policy at sea, and the unfortunate outbreak and course of the war will justify them against those others who regarded the course of events as an inevitable fate instead of a series of unavoidable mistakes. I should not have built a fleet for my country

with all my heart, if I had not believed in its ability to become a real free world-power. Perhaps I was deceived in this. The self-humiliation of our democracy at least raises the suspicion that I deceived myself as to the inner forces of the nation. Its world-political course has been broken by its disunity, not by outside conditions; this is my firm conviction, from which all the noise of the historiographers will not dissuade me.

This attempt on the part of German democracy to clear itself of our previous endeavours to secure peaceably a position in the world would only produce cool contempt from the English, once they had attained their object. The future generations of Germany, however, will experience whether the Anglo-Saxons will allow a Germany that is impotent at sea to thrive as an industrial State.

There are some political bookworms who say we ought to have refrained from building a fleet for a few decades like Bismarck did, and thus have abstained from provoking England until we had acquired a dominating position upon the Continent. Let these people who thus cling to Caprivi's standpoint remember what Bismarck himself said about the unavoidable German tension and its causes. According to her political principles of three hundred years' duration, England would never have permitted a close economic competitor, least of all us, to have acquired a dominating position on the Continent, quite apart from the question that the latter was an object worthy of our endeavour. England would, however, have opposed

even by force of arms any expansion of our power on the Continent all the more ruthlessly and dispassionately the less she herself feared us. On this account the opposition to France and Russia was eased in England in the 'nineties, and turned in our direction. In 1914, on the other hand, protected as Germany was by the construction of our fleet, which had almost passed through the "danger zone," we had practically won by peaceful methods the rank of the fourth world-power, without England having found an opportunity as yet to intervene. Extraordinary clumsiness on our part contributed to give her this opportunity at such a late hour. A prominent German statesman characterized this achievement as a first-class piece of diplomacy—in a negative sense, however. There was no other way to the position of world-power than by building a fleet. The highest prosperity is not given to a nation for nothing. Sea-power was a natural and necessary function for our national economy, the world-wide influence of which was disputing the palm with England and America, and had already overtopped the other nations. Such a position is dangerous, and it becomes untenable unless a navy which inspires respect increases the risk run by a competitor in any attempt to strike down his rival. It will indeed be scarcely possible to make German doctrinaires understand that such developments as those to overseas trade and sea-power cannot be commanded, but must proceed organically from the inmost development of the nation, and that a nation of seventy mil-

lions will literally starve on a confined territory without a dominating export trade.

VI

The years following Haldane's visit brought an improvement in Anglo-German relations which was unanimously welcomed in Germany, but, as events were to show, wrongly estimated in part. Our naval policy had proved its love of peace in 1912 by its one-sided sacrifice of the third ship, and (this was the main point) by the reduction of the four-ship rate of building to the two-ship rate in 1912. From a military point of view this was not without its dangers, as it increased England's advantage over us and actually worsened our prospects in a naval engagement from the autumn of 1915 onwards. But this actual proof of our love of peace, which could not be explained away by any sophistry, contained a political value which bore fruit, and would have borne still more if the events of July, 1914, which I shall come to later, had not cut short its development.[1] It is with a certain melancholy that I look back to the short time in which Freiherr von Marschall acted as our Ambassador in London. Marschall had dealt with naval questions from time to time in the Reichstag as Foreign Secretary before the appearance of the Navy Bills, and a former official of the Foreign Office gives him the following testimonial for his activities in these matters:

[1] For the rest, the best proof that we are not to blame for the race in naval armaments lay continually in a comparison of the Naval Estimates of the various naval Powers.

"that no Minister had done more than Marschall to awaken some understanding of the political and economic disadvantages of our not having a fleet, before the period of systematic popular instruction which began with the appointment of Admiral Tirpitz to the Admiralty."[1] His long exile in Constantinople had brought the statesmanlike qualities of this outstanding mind to full maturity, when the Emperor nominated him in May, 1912, to succeed Count Wolff-Metternich in the most important foreign political post of the Empire.

Contrary to his predecessor Freiherr von Marschall immediately began to study seriously the concrete numerical and constructional proportions of both navies, without a knowledge of which it was imopssible to deal properly with England. In this endeavour he came to see me shortly before his departure for London, and in the course of a long conversation we achieved perfect unanimity with regard to the naval policy to be pursued. Marschall had been recognized as an equal opponent by the English statesmen at the second Hague Conference in 1907, as well as during his successful activities in Constantinople. There he had had occasion to observe the power of England at one of its international focuses, and he had succeeded in getting the better of the English at the Sublime Porte. His appearance in London now interrupted for a time the German method of running after the English and being impressed by their ways. Marschall

[1] O. Hammann, *Der Neue Kurs* (1918), p. 175 *et seq.*

knew that the Briton becomes more polite, the more resolutely his competitor maintains his own standpoint. He declared that Germany could not carry out her economic policy without possessing a power at sea which could protect us against the necessity of yielding to England at every turn. When he handed in his credentials at Buckingham Palace in July, 1912, the King honoured him with an address in German, whereupon Marschall for his part gave the English Ministers present an opportunity, by using the German language all through the audience, of exhibiting a surprising grasp of our language hitherto unsuspected by any German diplomat. On this solemn occasion, Marschall complained that he saw his otherwise so good and promising reception compromised by the English press, in consequence of another navy-scare speech by Churchill: if things went on in this strain, he added, he felt that he would be exerting himself in vain.

This scene was described to me by an eye-witness, Captain Widenmann, our naval attaché, who said that the effect of this dignified and firm manner, which was based upon an exact knowledge of the circumstances, was significant. Never before during the years of the Anglo-German tension had a German statesman found such consideration and esteem in England, and Admiral Sir John Jellicoe expressed the general feeling in a conversation with Dritten when he said of Marschall: "he looks like a tower of confidence." His early death (September, 1912) was a loss of incalculable effect to Germany, who was so poor in real statesmen.

In discussing the growing English inclination towards an understanding I would restrict myself to those systems which lie within the province of the navy. The First Lord of the Admiralty, who had still hoped in 1912 to persuade our "luxury fleet" to the "two-keels-to-one" standard through the agency of Haldane, accepted in 1913 the 2 : 3 standard which had been proposed by Lloyd George in 1908 and by myself in 1912, in the approximated form of 10 : 16. By this means the Anglo-German naval agreement was practically achieved, and as we had no more Supplementary Bills in contemplation, Anglo-German naval discussions were finished in the main, and this bone of contention was done away with as far as one could see.[1] I did not want to endanger this development by any means. The reliability of German policy was our best weapon. I was therefore in opposition again, when in 1914 the German capacity for self-deception was once more over-estimating the improvement in Anglo-German relations. At that time the Emperor wanted to lay more stress on our foreign service, which in itself was quite in my line, and he desired to introduce an additional estimate for the preparation of four

[1] In a very involved form, Churchill made one more attempt to break the neck of the Navy Bill by proposing a year's holiday from naval shipbuilding. The unfavourable reception of this idea in England, however, relieved us of the necessity of going into it in any detail. I will only mention by the way that Bethmann, Kühlmann, the Foreign Office, and the party leaders of the Progressives and the Centrum refused most resolutely at that time to entertain at all seriously this proposal of a year's respite, for from 1912 onwards, and indeed for ever as it seemed, there prevailed the most complete unanimity regarding our naval policy.

more small cruisers, which were permanently to represent our rising political interests in the Mediterranean. I raised the strongest objections to the sudden introduction of an additional estimate on these terms, for it might produce political complications, as the sending of the German Military Mission to Constantinople, which had been done without my previous knowledge and to my regret. I asked through the Chief of the Cabinet to be relieved of my office, whereupon the proposal was dropped. In the autumn of 1914 I wanted to propose a supplementary estimate for the purpose of sending a battleship division to San Francisco for the World's Exhibition, and thereby to ask, by means of the budget, for the means which we lacked for keeping more ships in commission abroad. Even in the distant future there was no occasion, as far as one could see, for the introduction of a new Supplementary Bill. I never intended a further increase of our battleships, but on the contrary I had in view the possibility of reducing their number in the event of a continuation of the huge increase in the size of the ships.

After Haldane's visit, when our extravagant desire for an understanding led the English to believe for a time that they could treat us like Portugal, the Government in London refused an agreement of neutrality, but was ready to promise not to take part in "unprovoked (!) attacks" on us. For this meaningless kindness they put two conditions to the Emperor, firstly that the Supplementary Bill should be dropped alto-

gether, and secondly that Bethmann should remain Chancellor. The Emperor formally rejected this demand as an interference in our domestic affairs. When the interests of two nations who stand quite naturally together under the right policy, such as for example the Germans and the Russians, converge, the mutual confidence between the statesmen can never be too great. When, however, unbridgeable differences are held in check and cannot be turned into common interests, as is the case between Germany and England, a liking for one man cannot exceed a certain temperature without becoming dangerous. Yet England's desire was fulfilled and Bethmann remained. When the Emperor told me about this request, he added that I had been described as "a dangerous man" at the same time. I replied that no greater praise had ever been given me in my life.

At the time I was not yet sufficiently acquainted with the mentality of many Germans, which differs from the political instincts of other nations, and which considers the fact of a statesman being testified as "harmless" by a foreign political opponent is sufficient to recommend him to his own country.

CHAPTER XVI

THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

1. Retrospect.—2. German policy in July, 1914.—3. The house of cards.—4. Preventive war?—5. The guilt question.—6. The last days.—7. The navy's share.

I

During Kiel Week in 1914 our London Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, told me that England had agreed to the present German rate of shipbuilding; a war about our fleet or our trade was now out of the question; our relations were satisfactory, and the *rapprochement* was growing. Here he added the question whether a new Navy Bill was to be expected. My reply was: "We have no need of any more."

In this same Kiel Week a British battleship squadron was our guest for the first time in nineteen years, as a symbol of our improved relations. I had some English officers and the English Ambassador to lunch on board when the news arrived of the murder of the Austrian Heir-Apparent. Two days later the English ships sailed away. On July 2nd I went to Tarasp to take the cure, as I had planned. That piece of news had moved us all in an uncanny fashion. It was expected that some satisfaction would be required for the dark deed, and as a consequence of certain tension also throughout Europe I did not fear the possibility

of a world-war. Who was to take on the responsibility for such a thing? Moreover, our military intelligence showed that an attack from Russia was not to be reckoned with till 1916 at the earliest, if at all. It was not suspected that the murder in Serajevo had been contrived with the knowledge of the Czar or of England.

Daily reading of the English newspapers, together with official reports, had kept me in touch with the diminution of the agitation against us, and the easing of the tension between England and Germany. The fundamental feeling that we ought to be repressed had not altered, and it could not be forgotten for one moment that it was still England's political principle to hem in Germany's influence. But the moment for striking us down was felt by wide circles in England to be past. In 1897 the destruction of the German Empire, which had no fleet then, was discussed in cold blood. In 1905 the Civil Lord of the Admiralty openly threatened the still tiny German fleet with an annihilating attack. In 1908-9 a navy scare at least accompanied the Bosnian crisis, although there were no threats; the sword no longer sat loosely in the scabbard, the tone was no more arrogant and brutal, but it was still very much excited. During the Agadir and Haldane period, 1911 and 1912, a certain self-control and growing caution were mingled in the hostile tone. When the last attempt to force upon us the English hegemony, as expressed in the 2 : 1 proportion of the fleets, was defeated by us in 1912, the British Ministers

soon afterwards expressed themselves satisfied with our building ships in the proportion 10 : 16, and showed us more respect in every way. In 1912-14 they encouraged our support of the Austro-Hungarian standpoint, but we shall not discuss how far the secondary result of this, the emphasizing of Russo-German differences, was felt to be desirable. In July, 1914, England showed a desire at first, as I found out later, not to let loose a world-war on Serbia's account. This desire was actuated by the need, which is so strong in a commercial people, of preserving the general peace so long as their own interests were not endangered. It would be wrong to explain this attitude as friendship for Germany. England would have availed herself of every unobserved moment to reduce the German people to the condition of poverty from which the State of the Hohenzollerns and of Bismarck had alone raised it.

Meanwhile, the strengthening of Russian power had brought the danger of a world-war, on the whole gradually nearer since Russia had joined the Entente, and our Russian policy, which was wrong in so many ways, had not succeeded in easing the tension between us. The preparations for war of both Russia and France had been advanced to the utmost limits. The fact that England favoured these preparations, and the desire for conquest which was behind them, renders England's historical guilt irrefutably clear, particularly because she herself was much more cautious with us in consequence of the increased risk of war, and to a certain extent balanced by her cooler temperament the

increased explosive force of the Entente, within the unstable European situation brought about by her.

For the half-century of peaceful growth had now made us difficult to attack. Both Cabinet and public opinion in England found it more and more to their own interests to let us take part in the business of the world as their best customers. While England became more accustomed to this idea, those people in Germany who regarded England's predominance as a sort of divine right, and German power as something unusual and inadmissible, withdrew into the background. Even those who had hitherto taken the line that England should not be "provoked" by a navy of our own began to take heart in a Fatherland which was respected and protected by its own strength, in consequence of the more polite treatment of the reinforced German Empire. We had almost passed the unavoidable "danger zone" of our fleet-building, and our object, the peaceful equalizing of our rights with those of England, was within sight of fulfilment.[1]

England did not fear an attack from us. She had a guarantee against this in our unfavourable strategical situation in the "wet triangle," which did not in-

[1] The predominant opinion of political circles was summed up by a progressive Reichstag Deputy, Heckscher; I quote from a pamphlet: "Why did England abandon the policy of encirclement against us? We owe this to the creation of the German fleet." The illusion, to be sure, now swung over in German fashion to the opposite extreme. Instead of rejoicing in the position that had been won and the security of peace, people were intoxicated with the idea that the policy of encirclement had been "abandoned" at one stroke. These exaggerations in one direction and another were fatal to us.

crease, but limited, the effectiveness of our fleet, and together with our lack of any strong naval allies could not produce a desire for war in any responsible German. There was another guarantee in the proportion of five German to eight English squadrons, with which we had declared our ultimate aim satisfied, and further in the Emperor's notorious love of peace, and over and above everything else in the simple and fundamental fact of our position in the world, that we gained in and by peace more than was ever imaginable in the most glorious war.

England and Germany both experienced in themselves the truth of the old saying "*Si vis pacem, para bellum,*" which the German did not grasp until the coming of the great Prussian kings after unhappy centuries of self-annihilation. Trade and travel increased in both countries by leaps and bounds. The military burdens were borne with a jest, and had productive results in the fullest sense of the word. A real balance of power was appearing on the political horizon.

British statesmen naturally did not stress the fact, in their conversations with Germans, that it was mainly the presence of our nearly completed fleet in the North Sea that had produced their respectful tone, and had lessened the probability of a British attack. Of course they only spoke about their peaceful inclinations, and less of the facts which strengthened these inclinations. To-day the English are glad that the war has come, in the same sense as the American Ambassador Gerard said to me after the outbreak of war, that he could not

understand our allowing the war to happen, for we should have outstripped the English by peaceful means within a few years. But the English could hardly imagine in July, 1914, that our Government would keep the German fleet from striking. They did not think of war at all light-heartedly therefore. That stroke of genius, the policy of encirclement, which was to drive the noble quarry, Germany, to its death, was on the point of being broken by the growth of our power.

So far as I had honourably contributed to the preservation of peace, I looked back upon my life's work with satisfaction, and felt that the conclusion of the Navy Bill was not far off, when I could lay the completed task in the hands of my successor. He could then stand at the wheel in the petty war of officials and parliament; the German navy had done its work, in the sense of Stosch and of myself, if it maintained by its strength peace and liberty upon the seas.

Never before in the course of her long history was Germany more powerful and more respected by the greatest ones of the earth than in these days; never had she thriven more richly. In the judgment of experienced men of affairs, such as Prince Bülow for example, in his *Deutsche Politik,* we were to all intents and purposes "over the hill," and we had asserted our right to a place in the world. German civilization and economy were making up in full measure, in Eastern Asia, Africa, South America, and the Near East, for what our history had neglected to do. Just a few more years of calm and skilful leadership and we could not

have been uprooted as a world-state in the sense of Roosevelt's words spoken in 1904: "The prosperity of a nation has not normally the significance of a threat, but of a hope for the other nations." A chance, which in a certain sense is symbolical of the tragedy of the world-war, decreed that the Anglo-German colonial agreement was sent over to our London Ambassador in its final form for his signature on the very day of the declaration of war.

The ill-will of the Entente Powers ought at no moment to have been under-estimated. But in spite of this, the situation was not lost for German diplomacy when the Serbian challenge was sent to Austria in the summer of 1914. It only had to be handled frankly and at the right moment. An immediate request from our Emperor to the Czar, asking the latter to assist in obtaining satisfaction, might have been successful, and would at least have favourably influenced our political situation.

So far as Germany was concerned there was never a menace of any moment in the will to war, but it rested solely in the fatal mediocrity of the politicians in office.

II

On July 5th, 1914, the Austrian Ambassador handed in to the German Emperor at Potsdam a letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph, which had been brought by Count Hoyos, the Chief of Cabinet of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Berchtold, together with a memorandum which had been drawn up

before the assassination. This stated, as was reported to me when I was in Tarasp, that the threads of the conspiracy stretched to Belgrade; the Austrian Government would approach Serbia with a demand for the fullest satisfaction, and if this was not given would march her troops into Serbia.

The Emperor William, with his chivalrous feelings, promised loyalty and support against the Serbian murderers in reply to the Austrian Emperor's personal request. According to the statements which he made to my deputy in the park of the Potsdam Neues-Palais on the morning of July 6th, the Emperor did not consider an intervention by Russian to protect Serbia as probable, because the Czar would not support the assassins of royalty, and moreover Russia was at the time militarily and financially unfit for war. The Emperor proceeded to argue in somewhat sanguine fashion that France would put the brake on Russia, because of France's unfavourable financial position and her shortage of heavy artillery. The Emperor did not mention England; there was no thought of complications with this State. Thus the Emperor himself regarded any far-reaching dangers as improbable. He hoped that Serbia would give way, but he considered it necessary to be prepared for any other issue of the Austro-Serbian settlement. For this reason he summoned in due course on July 5th the Imperial Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Minister of War von Falkenhayn, the Foreign Under-Secretary Zimmermann, and the Chief of the Military Cabinet von Lyncker. It was

decided that measures which were calculated to arouse political attention or incur special expenses were to be avoided.

After this decision the Emperor went on his previously planned Scandinavian voyage on the advice of his Chancellor.

It was the constitutional duty and the supreme obligation of the Chancellor to examine the promise to Austria from the political standpoint of Germany's interests, and to keep its execution in hand. The Chancellor approved of the Emperor's decision, assuming as he did that Austria's crumbling position as a Great Power would go to pieces if it did not receive any satisfaction from the acquisitive Serbian State. The memory of the Bosnian crisis may also have had some influence.

I am not informed about the political activities of the Emperor during his Scandinavian voyage. I have reason to believe, however, that he did not notice any grave danger to the world's peace. When the Emperor did not consider that peace was threatened, he liked to give free play to his reminiscences of famous ancestors. In moments which he realized to be critical, on the other hand, he proceeded with extraordinary caution. If the Emperor had remained in Berlin, and if the normal Government machinery had been at work, then the Emperor in spite of his sporadic dealings with foreign policy would probably have found ways and means of evading the danger of war about the middle of the month. As, however, the Chief of

the General Staff, the Minister of War, the Chief of the Admiralty Staff, and I were kept away from Berlin during the succeeding days, the whole business was monopolized by the Chancellor, who, having no experience himself of the great European world, was unable to estimate correctly the value of his collaborators in the Foreign Office.

The Chancellor at any rate did not write to me for advice.

The events of July, and particularly Germany's part in them, are now so completely exposed by a series of partly official publications, that it does not seem to me to be in Germany's interests any longer for me to conceal my opinion.

After the experiences of the world-war the question might be raised whether the German nation ought not to have come to an agreement in time with the neighbours and heirs of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as to their partition. But if the opposite policy was pursued, which was in keeping with a sense of loyalty and with our historical development, and if the integrity and status of the Hapsburg monarchy as an ally was maintained, then the Chancellor was right when he considered that sufficient satisfaction must be given by Serbia to Austria. For it was only by this means that Austria could once more be made a useful member of the Triple Alliance, and her internal decay perhaps stopped. The mistake made in Berlin and Vienna only began with the treatment of the whole affair. In spite of Count Tisza's warnings, Bethmann and Berchtold

were unable to imagine that sufficient satisfaction could be obtained in other ways than by threatening an advance by Austrian troops. So Berlin laid itself out from the first to achieve the double aim of giving tottering Austria the necessary support for swift and sudden action, but on the other hand of "localizing" the conflict. In the event of the Serbian reply proving insufficient, which was considered probable, Austria was to insist on satisfaction by marching her troops into Serbia; and Vienna intended to give Bulgaria an opportunity of joining in any military operations, but this idea was received sceptically in Berlin. Every nerve was to be strained, however, to prevent this local and limited Balkan war from spreading to Europe. In spite of the most energetic endeavours on the part of the Chancellor, however, to maintain peace among the Great Powers, the world-war broke out. Consequently the question arises, how in spite of Austria's indubitable right to satisfaction, and to a clearing out of the Serbian nest of conspirators, it has been possible for the enemy, regardless of all the efforts of the German Government to keep the peace, to convince almost the whole world of Germany's guilt in the world-war?

I intend in the following pages to contribute a little to the solution of this riddle, and that is only possible by discussing the political psychology of Bethmann-Hollweg.

As early as July 11th the Berlin Foreign Office was convinced that the Entente had advised Belgrade to

give way, though I learnt this some years afterwards. In this the Chancellor had the means wherewith to untie the knot. He drew, however, from the assumption that the Entente did not want a war, the short-sighted conclusion that Austria could probably force an entry into Serbia, regardless of the Entente, without endangering the peace of the world. For, as Zimmermann has said, on July 8th it was assumed in Berlin "that if Austria advanced into Serbia, England and even France would combine with us to influence Russia so as to localize the conflict." The strength of the connection between the three Great Powers was underestimated, and therefore the danger of a universal war also. The perfectly comprehensible disinclination on the part of human beings to confess to mistakes that they have made makes it difficult for the Chancellor and his following to confess frankly to their optimism, which was so ruinous for Germany at that time. I possess, however, in the reports of my department sufficient reflections of the atmosphere of the Wilhelmstrasse in those days. On July 13th the Chancellor had been informed on the essential points of the intended ultimatum, upon which I received a communication in Tarasp from my deputy. The portion of the letter sent to me ran as follows:

"Our Ambassador in Vienna, Herr von Tchirschky, has learned privately, and also from Count Berchtold, that the Note to be sent by Austria to Serbia will put the following demands:

"1. A proclamation from King Peter to his people,

calling upon them to dissociate themselves from the Greater-Serbian agitation.

"2. The participation of a high Austrian official in the inquiry into the assassination.

"3. The dismissal and punishment of all officers and officials who are shown to have had a share in it."

I knew nothing about the Entente having advised Belgrade to keep the peace as was optimistically assumed in the Wilhelmstrasse at the time. It strikes me as peculiar to-day, that the Entente has not been able to bring forward conclusive documents proving its intervention in Belgrade in the interests of peace. The Serbian murder could not indeed very well be countenanced by any civilized State. When I received that communication in Tarasp, my very first impression was that this ultimatum was unacceptable to the Serbians and might easily lead to a world-war. I never believed in the possibility of "localizing" the Austro-Serbian passage of arms with regard to Russia, just as little as I had any faith in England's neutrality in a continental war. I wrote to my deputy in this sense and recommended an agreement with the Czar.

This suggestion had no effect.

I saw that the danger of the situation lay particularly in the fact that England formed the final link in the Entente chain.

The traditional hostility of Pan-Slavism towards the German Empire and the Austro-Russian jealousy in the Balkans continued to exist in spite of the Pots-

dam meeting in 1910, and the Russian *intelligentsia* had allowed themselves to get heated about our Balkan policy between 1908 and 1914. The circles represented by the *Novoye Vremya* wanted the war, although not before 1916. Yet Sassonov and the Czar still had the reins sufficiently in hand so that German policy could in my own firm conviction steer off the Russian impulse towards expansion from us and Austria-Hungary, by giving it an opening on other fronts that were not vital to us. It was only the clumsiness of our policy which brought the Russian war-party to the top and ultimately made it possible for Suchomlinov to deceive the Czar.

Russia certainly had no right to make a war out of the chastisement of Belgrade, but the danger that large Russian circles would demand a war ought not to have been under-estimated. I was convinced even before the ultimatum that the St. Petersburg war-party would be held in check if we treated with the Czar in confidence; if we acted too directly, then we might almost certainly reckon that England would let loose the war in conformity with a century-old political tradition of the maintenance of "continental balance of power" as she understood it. I laid stress on this danger of arousing the slumbering English will-to-war in a conversation with Prince Henry, who visited me in Tarasp in the middle of July. My views were shared by Minister of State von Loebell, and the Saxon Ambassador von Salzo, who were both staying there.

The question of interrupting my cure was then settled by the Chancellor asking me not to return to Berlin, so as to avoid sensation. As late as July 24th the Chancellory telephoned to the Admiralty that my return would render the situation more acute. I could not consider that a return on my own account would be either correct or useful, particularly as the Chancellor, who had been upset by the issue of the Supplementary Bill dispute in 1912, kept me out of foreign affairs with a certain jealousy, and had begun to weave stories about me to the effect that I interfered with his policy. For the rest I was unable to obtain a clear picture of what was going on from the daily reports of my department, which was naturally only badly informed by the Foreign Office, and in consequence I received the impression that no Power would take upon itself the responsibility of a bigger conflict. We had been accustomed to these tensions for years. Bülow had always mastered them. The intensification of the situation after the delivery of the ultimatum, and particularly the news of the return of our fleet into home waters, finally caused me to return home on July 27th without consulting the Chancellor.

The ultimatum was handed to the Serbian Government on July 23rd; July 16th had originally been agreed upon for this, but Vienna postponed the event in order to wait for the departure from St. Petersburg of President Poincaré, who was working for war. This postponement was regretted in Berlin be-

cause it led to the fading of the fresh impression of the assassination and consequently of the motive for intervention. This difference of opinion between Berlin and Vienna was dominated by the endeavour of both Governments to maintain the peace of the world, and they only differed in their views as to the method of how to tackle the Serbian wasps' nest so as to not endanger peace. Berlin's standpoint was probably the more correct. If an advance was to be made into Serbia at all, which was indeed far more dangerous than the originators of the idea considered probable, swift and impressive action should at least have been taken so that negotiations could have been introduced all the more readily after a pledge had been secured.

German policy gave up the most difficult psychological problem, when the Serbian reply was known.

On July 25th, Serbia accepted the demands of the Austrian ultimatum in the main, and declared her readiness to negotiate the rest. How far England, Russia, France, and Italy had helped Austria to a certain diplomatic success by pressure on Belgrade, I do not know. At any rate it cannot be denied that the Serbian reply showed an unexpected compliance, and I do not think that the Austrian Government showed a right sense of proportion when it declared this reply to be unacceptable as a basis for further negotiations. But Bethmann-Hollweg and Count Berchtold did not grasp the tangibility of the diplomatic success which had already been achieved. As Austria's honour had been saved, and Bethmann-Hollweg also had endeavoured

to prevent a European war, the danger of war could probably have been regarded as averted if Austria had been satisfied with her success. She could have given the Serbs a short space of time for the immediate fulfilment of the desired concessions, as a condition for negotiations regarding the other demands. Even if international supervision had then been imposed for the other demands, the high value to Austria of the accomplished humiliation of Serbia with England's consent would not have been diminished.

Things went otherwise. The helm was put over the wrong way and the ship continued to turn in the direction that had been taken. Bethmann and Berchtold did not clearly see the imponderabilia which would result if they made the Serbian reply a ground for marching troops into the country. Although the reply offered a possibility for future negotiations, this was passed over, and it was not seen how dangerously the St. Petersburg war party was strengthened thereby. Trust in the peaceful intentions of the Entente, and England particularly, gave rise to a hope in the statesmen of the Central Powers of localizing the Serbian conflict, and led to a stiffening of Vienna's tone towards Serbia. In order to put a complete stop to the undermining of Austria by the Serbs, they plunged into a far greater danger, and jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

The acuteness of the situation now caused the Chancellor and Sir Edward Grey to put forward proposals of mediation. I cannot touch upon the mistake which

the Imperial Chancellor made, in my opinion, in his treatment of the English proposals of mediation which began on July 25th, without previously acknowledging Bethmann's good intentions.

The Chancellor diplomatically announced in absolutely conclusive fashion his endeavour to prevent the world-war. I may mention here the resumption of the Austro-Russian negotiations which had stopped in consequence of a Russian misunderstanding; further, Bethmann's direct and moderating influence upon Vienna, beginning after the rejection of the Serbian reply; and finally the spontaneous offer of the proposal of mediation, and to limit the Austrian occupation of Serbia to holding that country in pawn until Serbia had given satisfaction. These proofs of Bethmann's desire for peace are followed by others which will be discussed later. How was it possible, then, that peace should be wrecked in spite of so many good intentions? Because the fundamentally false hope of a real will-to-peace on the part of the Entente and England particularly, which had created the belief in a localization of the chastisement of Serbia, still continued to take effect, and lowered still further the slight diplomatic skill of our leaders.

When Sir Edward Grey suggested on July 26th that England and Germany, with France and Italy, should undertake mutual mediation, the Chancellor did not realize the opportunity which offered itself, just as in the case of the Serbian answer. Caution was, to be sure, advisable with English proposals of

conference. It had been Germany's experience to find herself at a disadvantage in conferences of the Great Powers, as a result of the superior diplomatic weight of the strongest sea-power and the corresponding partisan attitude of the assembly. At this point, however, the European "areopagus" (as Bethmann called it), proposed by Grey, ought not to have been refused, because it offered the sole possibility of still averting the world-war. Bethmann could have accepted Grey's proposal of an ambassadorial conference immediately, on the condition that Austria-Hungary might secure for herself a pledge in Serbia, as Grey conceded later (July 30th) at Bethmann-Hollweg's suggestion. The Chancellor, however, took up a standpoint which gave the enemy a pretext for asserting that the Chancellor considered it beneath Austria's dignity to accept the "good services" of four Great Powers; that in addition, Germany did not want to interfere in the Serbian affair; and further that the Austro-Serbian conflict had occurred and was unavoidable. His argument was that one could only try to localize it. Accordingly he telegraphed to Lichnowsky on July 27th: "It is impossible for us to allow our ally to be brought before a European court in this dispute with Serbia." A report of the Austrian Ambassador says that on the same day Jagow informed him of the disinclination of the German Government to take up Grey's proposal of a conference.

There could have been doubts about the degree of loyalty in Grey's proposal. Such doubts, however,

ought not to have decided the question of acceptance. The Central Powers should have reserved guarantees for themselves: as I have already mentioned, Grey raised no difficulties on July 30th when Bethmann demanded such a guarantee of a pledge for Austria. If Grey did withdraw his proposal of a conference before Bethmann-Hollweg's refusal of it was known to him, it is not certain whether he was influenced by a desire to render the negotiations more difficult. Even he could have promised himself more from direct Austro-Russian negotiations at that time. He would then have found himself in agreement with the Chancellor, who, although he rejected the idea of a conference, was trying to mediate directly between Vienna and St. Petersburg.

The secondary mistake committed by Berlin in refusing a conference was just as great as the primary one of relying too much on the disinclination of the Entente to go to war. Bethmann showed himself over-sensitive for the dignity of the Austro-Hungarian State, which was not identical with the German Empire, but which the policy of the Chancellor at that time had bound to us for life or death. Bethmann contended further that we should not interfere in a procedure which had been approved by him and the Foreign Office since July 5th. Jagow was so little interested in the Austro-Serbian conflict that he confessed to the German Ambassador on July 27th that he had not yet found time to read the Serbian reply to Austria. How are such diplomatic mistakes at a

fatal hour to be explained? They can only be explained by the general characteristics of the political system which we had had in control of the Empire since 1909. The question at issue was indeed the avoidance of a world-war, but as a Royal Prussian Assize Court would certainly have decided that the just Austrian and the unjust Serbian causes were a purely Austro-Serbian affair, Grey's proposal to a different effect had to be interpreted as not being to the point. Legal narrow-mindedness is not, however, sufficient to explain the complete absence of instinct with which the Chancellor proceeded in this matter. The real explanation is that deeper quality which sealed the fate of most *démarches* during his Chancellorship, the lack of the sense of reality in so many Germans.

III

Bethmann-Hollweg had been building for years at a "house of cards," as he himself afterwards called it—in other words, an Anglo-German understanding that was not based upon facts, but upon diplomatic flattery.

Outsiders may think that if only one arrives somehow at a conference table and exchanges friendly words across it, clearing up misunderstandings and opening up prospects into the distant future, a great deal will have been gained. English policy has only used such things to inveigle others; England herself, however, allowed the issue of the negotiations to be

determined by the unspoken realities which remained under the table. After Bethmann had been prevented in 1912 from exchanging for English kindnesses and promises the only reality which had any weight in our favour—that is, the German fleet—the prospects of a permanent and real understanding had perceptibly increased. But those realities which weighed in England's favour ought not to have been overlooked. The world obeyed in general the command of the strongest sea-power. We were its most powerful counterpart, but we had to be careful for that very reason not to go further than our interests unavoidably demanded. Those illusions about England which almost reduced our naval armament below the safety level in 1912, and would have determined the inevitable but probably slow ruin of Germany, were now suddenly endangering peace. The motives which had prompted England to "loyalty" towards Austria and us during the Balkan wars of 1912-14 were idealized, and it was consequently believed that even a Balkan war in which Austria herself would take part could be localized within the storm-centre of Europe.

As far back as July 9th the sober view had been represented in the Foreign Office that if, contrary to all expectation, the maintenance of the world's peace was not accomplished, England would probably immediately join in on the side of our enemies, without waiting to see the course taken by the war. The peaceful attitude of the English Foreign Office in the ensuing weeks deceived the Bethmann circle more and

more, however. There was even an inclination towards a peaceable view of England in the General Staff. When Grey's warning words were known after the delivery of the ultimatum: "The situation would be very dangerous, and a war between the four Great Powers might easily ensue," the learned ones of the Wilhelmstrasse squeezed out of this sentence the assurance that Grey wanted to stress the fact that no danger of war existed with the fifth Great Power, England. Jagow, Stumm, and others strengthened the Chancellor in such ill-founded ideas. They also succeeded in winning over the Emperor to them. When the fleet, which was in Norway, received orders to return home on July 25th, the Emperor wanted to send all the big battleships into the Baltic. The Foreign Office desired the same, so as not to provoke England. The Emperor, however, bluntly told the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet at the time that no doubts as to England's peaceable attitude were allowed; the whole fleet therefore would be held in readiness against the Russians. Technical reasons alone caused him to consent to a part of the fleet going to the North Sea.

I must raise against the British Cabinet the grave charge that, although it was well aware of Bethmann's love of peace and his whole nature, it brought upon itself a large share of the responsibility for the outbreak of war by its vagueness as to England's attitude during the crisis, even though it is granted that the English Cabinet really wanted peace at first and

had not any *arrière pensées* from the outset of allowing Bethmann to run his head into a noose. Grey would have been able to preserve peace if he had made clear in time to Bethmann England's attitude in the event of the Austro-Serbian conflict extending to the rest of Europe. That he omitted to do this is more surprising than the fact that Lloyd George did not hesitate to threaten us openly at the instigation of the Cabinet in July, 1911, although the situation at that time was by no means so acute. This time a corresponding private warning was even avoided. Grey's silence about England's attitude strengthened in their opinion those Berlin politicians who favoured invasion of Serbia. Grey and the English Cabinet knew exactly that Bethmann would do everything to avoid a war with England. They also knew that there were very few politicians in Germany who had any adequate idea of England's ability to annihilate another nation without mercy. Only a few of us could look into England's soul, with its cold indifference towards subject peoples, like the Irish or the Indians for example; it is the year 1919 that first brought this home to the average German. Previously many people in Germany had the idea that the more defenceless Germany was, the more free play England would give her. If only our politicians had realized the true spirit of English policy, they would have armed to the utmost on the one hand, and would have diplomatically exercised the greatest caution on the other, so as to give England no opportunity for annihilating

our people. The British Ministers knew in what state of terrible delusion many Germans lived as to the dangerous nature of Germany's position. They also knew that Germany could not make a vital question for herself out of the plus or the deficit of Serbia's satisfaction. In spite of this they omitted to give any timely warning. Whether history will succeed in bringing to light the real extent and the reasons for this British ambiguity, I must leave to the future.

In the days of July the German Government brought upon itself grave blame with regard to the German people, but not England or the Entente, by its ignorance of the world. England, who had whipped up the French desire for revenge for the already half-forgotten Alsace-Lorraine, and had made important concessions to the Russians in order to orientate them against Germany, was only reaping the fruits of her own endeavours when matters came to war. Strong tendencies to attack us were still in full swing in England, just as in Germany there existed a justifiable anxiety aroused by England that the policy of encirclement would some time and somehow change to one of force. The question whether England considered that the given moment had come in July, 1914, retires in view of this. Some time in July a moment did occur in England, of which Grey had said to Sassonov in September, 1912, "that if the circumstances in question were to come to pass, England would do all she could to inflict a most sensible blow on the power of Germany." Doubt can only exist as to the exact

point of time in July at which this change was effected in the British Cabinet. England was geographically and militarily in the fortunate position of being able to keep in the background, and with her usual mastery to keep her puritanical humanitarian face at the very moment when she had decided to go to war. In doing so the British Cabinet corrupted not only the English nation, but also the German, which has always fallen a victim to foreign hypocrisy ever since the time of the Goths. Suchomlinov would never have set the machinery of the war in motion had he not been certain that the British power was ready to join in.

After the events of the last year there was scarcely any possible doubt that England would never countenance a military weakening of France by us, and in the event of an invasion of Serbia the possibility of a war with Russia and consequently with France had to be taken into account when the matter was looked at from the most unfavourable point of view. As Bethmann, however, was not willing to recognize that England's peaceableness was a result of our growing sea-power, but preferred to interpret it sentimentally, he also lacked all feeling for the real *limits* of this peaceableness. The inclination for an understanding which was rising in England in spite of everything reposed, as I have said, principally upon a sober estimate of the decreasing profitableness of a war. England had begun to acknowledge our power so long as in English opinion we acknowledged hers. We

might regard this as going too far, but we had to adapt ourselves to the general situation. Bethmann on the other hand, who had failed to appreciate German interests in 1912, now failed to realize the extent of England's claims, and in July, 1914, he once more hoped for a settlement made in good heart instead of with an eye on the main chance. His same insufficiently developed sense of reality, which dealt feebly with the requirements of the State, also saw the British line of thought unclearly, and thus supplied by his lack of dexterity the opportunity for the Entente to draw its net tight.

England wanted to allow Austria some diplomatic success over Serbia, but she could not permit a diplomatic defeat of Russia, without shattering the artificial structure of the latter's power which she had erected against Germany. Bethmann's and Berchtold's policy of invading Serbia was on the contrary based on the expectation that the love of peace shown by England in recent years would go so far as to cause the Czar, if the worst came to the worst, either to refuse his traditional patronage to the Serbs or to venture on a continental war without England's help. German politicians failed to perceive that this would threaten to cut the sinews of England's Entente policy.

Just because her relations with France, and with Russia too, were not based upon a formal treaty of alliance, but upon looser agreements, England had accompanied on principle every kindness towards us, during the ten years of the encirclement period, by

unmistakable signs in the other direction. During that visit of the English fleet to Kiel at the end of June, 1914, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Buchanan, announced the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian naval convention. The charming wife of the commander of the English squadron in Kiel, Lady Warrender, an Anglo-Saxon of the type of those political women which we scarcely know in Germany, was rather embarrassed when I referred to this fact with gentle irony. I said that it was all the same to us whether in the event of war British and Russian squadrons operated together or apart, but it might easily lead to a misunderstanding if such trains of thought were voiced at that moment. She described Buchanan as a simple-minded blunderer. Whether rightly or not, the fact of the convention as such ought to have sharpened our wits.

Whilst we gave England the choice, by means of an unskilful and clumsy imitation of the Bosnian crisis in 1908-9, of either putting the Grand-Ducal party out of humour or of opening the war under particularly advantageous conditions, there came to the surface the feeling of those London clubs whose minds were steadfastly fixed on the war and left it to a favourable moment to decide when we should be struck down by force. When in the course of July, England realized the *cul-de-sac* into which Bethmann had got himself, she turned away from the businesslike peace policy of an understanding, which she kept up until Grey's proposal of a conference (if we are to believe

her assurances) and turned to the no less business-like policy of war in order, in her character of "perfidious Albion," to make Russians and Germans kill one another. The opportunity which we offered them could never again return so favourably. They now had the possibility of putting us morally in the wrong, and of interpreting the follies of our policy as agitation for war. They could throw the overwhelming power of the world against us, and by making us appear as the attacker—which Bethmann never thought of—deprive even our own alliances of their legal value.

Finally the moment itself was tempting strategically to the English, which Bethmann did not know, and he did not consult me about it. Although the British Cabinet only came into the war hesitatingly, the will-to-war in it gained the upper hand in the situation, and ultimately put the match to the fuse by means of secret encouragement of the French, and consequently of the Russians.

Bethmann did not want a world-war, and did not expect that one would break out. He therefore believed that Austria might venture on a local war. Neither he nor Jagow had the power of reversing the actual situation; they did not see that the Entente Powers showed on the one hand a certain degree of readiness to settle this local crisis mutually, but on the other hand they were not at all frightened of a world-war. Bethmann and Jagow persisted in their conviction that the Austro-Serbian conflict was unavoidable, but could be localized, for irretrievable

days, until the forces which were working for war within the Entente, and were grossly under-estimated by them, had won the day. It now happened that French chauvinism and Pan-Slav anger had risen in the same degree as the English desire for war had decreased. Certainly the deciding power was England, but she only kept the bellicose forces in check so long as peace seemed more advantageous to her than war. Fear of Europe's "intervention," and the hope that the Entente "faced by an unalterable fact" would adjust itself to it, had induced Bethmann-Hollweg to give a free hand to Austria's policy of invasion. So that he believed that he could steer past a general conflict by a short local war. Then when, contrary to expectation, Serbia's reply was not altogether "negative," and when Grey "intervened," Bethmann lacked the instinct to grasp the whole new situation.

They had in the Wilhelmstrasse a peculiar conception of the possibilities of securing the earnestly desired peace by means of a nervous preparation for war, which was mere weak pretence in the main. These politicians who never wanted to draw the sword, and who were unfortunately unable, as results have shown, to judge the military requirements of a preparation for war, believed that they were able to threaten with uncertain military measures which they themselves did not take seriously.

The political sense of proportion of these men fills one with amazement. On July 20th the Secretary of State, von Jagow, declared to a representative of the

Admiralty Staff that, if it came to a war between the Triple Alliance and the Dual Alliance, England would probably not join in. He, Jagow, had an idea, however, by which one might still increase the inclinations of the English to remain neutral, and this was to threaten the English with the immediate occupation of Holland if they declared war against us. The whole thing would naturally only be a bluff. The next day, after discussing the matter in the Admiralty, the Admiral told Jagow that his "bluff" would be the surest means of compelling England to come in against us. The reflected splendour of Bismarck's authority, that still lay over the Wilhelmstrasse in the eyes of the officers of my Ministry, was fast fading away, and the incident was reported to me with the comment: "One could only ask oneself again: how is it possible that the conduct of German foreign policy is entrusted to such a personality?" Jagow had been put at the head of the Foreign Office by Bethmann on account of his cautious nature which rendered any decision difficult for him. He would have been the last person to occupy Holland, an action which would have been contrary to all German interests. He now thought that he could make an impression on England by a "strong" gesture, with just the same *naïveté* with which he had displayed to the French Ambassador a few months previously an appetite for Belgian colonies that Germany did not really possess in view of her almost unopened African territories.

When Bethmann later became aware that England would seriously go to war, he broke down completely. But why did he rely so long with regard to England on his own political reckoning which had so often been wrong? Why did he pay no attention during those long three weeks to all the warnings that reached him from England and about England? Why did he not endeavour to procure some assurance as to England's attitude in the event of a continental war? This riddle too is explained by the peculiarity of his fundamental scheme.

IV

On July 8th the Under-Secretary of State, Zimmermann, issued directions that all conspicuous measures, such as interruption of leave, etc., were to be avoided, just as the Emperor's voyage had not been abandoned. For the main essential of the success of the localization of the war would be to avoid the impression that we were inciting Austria.

During the negotiations of 1911-12 it had struck me that Bethmann-Hollweg avoided straight and open discussions, and preferred to settle even such questions, the nature of which demanded general deliberation, suddenly with an accomplished fact after long and hesitating delay. In addition there was Bethmann's capacity, which had been early noticed by one of my colleagues, and also by his admirers, "of asserting something which would not be taken at all seriously, and of not merely putting the matter objec-

tively, but subjectively also."[1] The aim of the procedure which he had chosen here was good—the avoidance of the world-war. But the means used to this end were unskilful; for they helped considerably to promote the world-war. Bethmann did not see that ambiguity did not bring us any respect in such a matter, and was extraordinarily dangerous. The world would not believe that Austria had sent Notes to Serbia without our having previous knowledge of them. For this bureaucratic method of catching people napping, brought to bear, as it were, on a European affair, and on statesmen of the rank of the English instead of an open discussion which would have awakened confidence, changed the already heavily laden atmosphere to a higher state of tension.

From reports of July 11th, I find that it was conjectured in the Foreign Office at the time, that the Austrians would have preferred us to have refused them our help as an ally against Serbia. Our ally knew so little what she wanted, it was said, that she now asked us what she was actually to demand of the Serbs.

This impression was scarcely correct. It showed how little Berlin ought to reckon on Austria remaining firm in the course which she had taken to save her honour. In spite of this the Chancellor failed to realize how unenviable his position and how enormous his responsibility before history would be, if

[1] H. Kötschke, *Unser Reichskanzler sein Leben und Wirken* (Berlin, 1916), p. 17 *et seq.*

he appeared as the man who had left Germany's future in the hands of the Vienna Government without any further control.

This attitude was bound to deprive our policy of the reputation for straightforwardness which Frederick the Great and Bismarck had won for it. Trustworthiness is also an asset of power which must be carefully treasured, and it is a remarkable phenomenon that politicians with only a slight understanding of real power generally have no fine sense for the imponderabilia of prestige. When Grey's proposal of a conference arrived, Bethmann thought he had better stick to his attitude, and so he refused the proposal; in other words, he stood by his declaration of "non-intervention" in the Austrian affair, which meant that the decisive moment for a possible action in favour of peace was lost. Thus Austria was able to intensify the situation by her declaration of war on Serbia (July 28th) whilst German policy stood spellbound within its self-imposed limits.

The English with their cool way of discussing questions of power could or would not understand Bethmann apparently standing aside, although his doing so actually purposed the localization of the conflict and the maintenance of peace between the Great Powers. It was, however, remote from their own way of thinking to assume that a German statesman might think it wrong openly to support Austria and talk about Germany's interests of power and prestige. They noticed that German diplomats were partly too

distrustful and partly too confiding. At the same time they saw the most favourable opportunity for war approaching. In the inconsistency of our policy of invading Serbia we offered the Entente the pretext for imputing to us the *preventive war*. The grave charge of war agitation, which has done us such immeasurable harm, was raised.

The encirclement policy of the Entente had at any rate several times occasioned some nervousness in Germany. For it evinced indubitable symptoms of a conspiracy. Since the end of 1912 we knew that the Serbs were intended for the part of the Piedmont of the Balkans, of beginning the disintegration of the Hapsburg Monarchy when the time should be ripe. We were not far from stamping out these sparks then before they could burst into flame, and indeed this was seriously considered by Austria in 1913, but turned down by Italy and us. Further, we had heard of Russian utterances to the effect that something was going to begin in 1916. Consequently one occasionally met with the view expressed by irresponsible and half-informed people, but solely by such people that "*If* the war cannot be avoided, *then* the sooner the better." The Russian armaments, which "were to be ready in 1916," were not to be taken too lightly on account of the St. Petersburg war-party, which actually availed itself of the European confusion in the last week of July, 1914, to set going the whole conflagration. In spite of this a German preventive war against Russia could never have been justified. Moreover, our cau-

tion with regard to England, not to mention France, ought not to have slumbered. If the British lion had cringed more and more since 1912, we had still to reckon with the possibility of this only being the crouch before the spring. Slight doubts of this kind, however, did not exclude co-operation on a large scale with England on a real foundation. Only we ought not to have given it any cause to spring. England's ententes were only loosely woven until the treaty of September, 1914, and a peaceful solution of the policy of encirclement seemed possible, however, in view of the English fear of the risk, provided Germany was at the same time courageous and cautious, and armed herself undismayed, but avoided leaving any excuse for the enemy's will-to-war.

The story that Germany worked systematically for the war is a wild fable which is best refuted by our unpreparedness for war, as I shall show later. For the rest, General von Moltke, who was taking the cure at Carlsbad during the critical weeks, assured me later that he had nothing to do with the negotiations, and had never recommended that the ultimatum to Serbia should be used as a test to see if the Entente wanted war, or did not yet consider itself strong enough.

If the Chancellor had consulted me, as was his duty —he must reconnoitre the military possibilities in every direction before taking such a course—then I should have had to tell him that from the standpoint of the navy the danger of war, which was undesirable

in itself, would not offer any favourable strategical opportunities. The building of dreadnoughts, by the introduction of which England automatically doubled the fighting force of our navy, had only been going on for four years. The Kiel Canal was not ready. The fleet would not reach its maximum until 1920. Several weaknesses which were inherent in our navy, particularly in its leadership, in consequence of its youthfulness would only disappear in the course of time. Even if the number of ships did not increase, the navy became better and better every year, like young wine. The mechanical comparison of the number of ships lost its significance as the psychological moment of internal organization grew in importance. The French had openly expressed their doubts as to whether we should really be so " foolish " as to reduce the number of our ships in building from 1912 onwards according to the Navy Bill. We had dared to do so, and thereby given England sound proof that we were not taking part in a race of armaments. In spite of this fact, and although our alliance did not guarantee us any important or certain support at sea, I reckoned that from about 1916 onwards an English attack would no longer be probable from a naval point of view. Every year of peace was therefore an inestimable gain for us. I left no doubt as to these views of mine in my conversations at Tarasp.

If the Chancellor had only consulted his colleagues in his treatment of this question, as no other statesman would have failed to do, he would have divided

the responsibility. I for my part should have advised against the ultimatum.

In his fear of clearness, the Chancellor was so little prepared for the war that collective consultations between the political and military leaders never took place, either on the politico-strategical problems of the conduct of the war or even on the prospects of a world-war at all. I was never even informed of the invasion of Belgium, which immediately raised naval questions when it took place. It might here be interjected, whether I for my part was not in a position to urge for the preparations of a mobilization of the whole Government in time of peace? Nobody who knows the conditions that existed in our governing bodies at that time will ask this question.

Bethmann's greatest mistake from the point of view of the history of the world does not lie in his miscalculations of July, 1914, but in his failure to make preparations beforehand during the years when the enemy coalition was collecting all its forces, and strengthening by means of warlike preparations the resolve in its continental members to avail themselves of any opportunity for an armed battle against Germany. With little trouble and at an expense that would have been scarcely perceptible in the long run, the German nation could have been guarded against the blow of this war, even though constant fear of it had occasioned the necessary measure of precaution. The danger was there; the consequences had to be deduced from it. For France and Russia had

reached the limit of their powers in their armaments, and France had even exceeded them in a certain sense. Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other hand had not nearly found the limit of their powers. How is this terrible omission to be explained, which would have raised the gravest charges against the responsible statesmen in any established nation?

The Chancellor, supported by the Secretary of the Treasury Wormuth, was afraid of the expression "armament race." He thought to serve peace by restraint in warlike preparations for war. By this means the Entente was to be convinced of our peaceful intentions. The whole world knew in truth that we wanted to keep the peace, but it raised such a shout of indignation at our insufficient Defence Bills, that it could hardly have been louder if we had really made thorough-going preparations for war. The insufficiency of our armaments, however, loosened the sword of our neighbours. If we had drawn the natural inference from the growing strength of Russia since 1909, and had actually kept pace with our opponents' armaments, then peace and friendly relations with Russia based upon respect would have been secured. It was an enormous mistake in method for us not to secure the highest degree of military defensive strength in view of our disadvantages in diplomacy and geography. What would have become of Prussian Germany if Frederick the Great and his father had been afraid of a race in armaments with Austria? A nation which was taking part in such a

race for the economic mastery of the world, as we were before this war, must not be afraid of the suspicions of rivals and pacifists unless it is going to lose everything.

This truth, upon the realization and pursuit of which the development of the German State has reposed according to the different stages of its career since the time of the Great Elector, has remained unknown to German Radical democracy.[1] But our political leadership was in league with its own illusions and not with the political wisdom and traditions of our difficult historical progress and suffering.

A not inconsiderable portion of these omissions could, however, have been made good in July, 1914. On July 5th the Emperor said that in spite of the improbability of a world-war, one had to be prepared for the possibility of a collision. It was obvious from the interconnection of the European system of alliances that we had to be prepared for the worst in such a crisis. But what happened?

In July, 1914, we exported considerable quantities of grain to France. There was a shortage of saltpetre which became almost a vital danger to the army.

[1] If I am often obliged to attack the blindness of wide democratic circles in foreign affairs, I know quite well that there are numerous honourable and patriotic Social Democrats and Radicals who have shown complete understanding of the needs of the German State. By the word "Democrats" I mean, in this book, the powerful tendencies represented by Scheidemann, Gotheim, Haase, and the *Frankfürter Zeitung*, which had in effect undermined the strength of the State. My attitude in this matter has nothing to do with home politics.

Copper, nickel, and other materials necessary for war were very short, and every opportunity of supplementing our supplies of them unostentatiously was disregarded almost intentionally. In order to prove the actual harmlessness of Berlin, even if it meant the ruin of the country, the simplest measures of precaution both economic and industrial were not taken for times of stress.

Apart from the desire to raise no false suspicions in the minds of the Entente, the instinct of keeping scrupulously to the Budget ought to be taken as a guide. We ought to have been able to buy in on a large scale and to be indemnified by the Reichstag if peace should prevail. The event of war was apparently no longer taken seriously. The Government left every department to itself, and quite in the dark as to the views and intentions of the others. Whilst the various military organizations only needed to press the button for mobilization, there was no general scheme for the event of a world-catastrophe. The end of July, 1914, found us in a state of chaos, and indeed with a talent that was not quite equal to the English gift of improvisation, in which our moral conscience could not console us by the fact that the German Empire had been least occupied of all the Great Powers with the possibilities of war. In spite of these suicidal proofs of our love of peace, the world allowed itself to be persuaded of our guilt owing to the mysteries of our policy in July, 1914, which looked like war-agitation. We were the sheep in wolf's clothing.

V

In discussing the guilt question a twofold mistake is easily made in Germany. In the first place political circumstances are construed in too logical a manner. Many persons seek to prove from a multitude of various symptoms that the world-war could not have been arrested in view of the enemy's malevolence. I consider this view to be wrong. There can indeed be no doubt about the malevolent intention of England, France, and many Russians to smash our Empire. But we ought to have taken all the more care not to have given them an opportunity of carrying it out. As I said in 1904, every opportunity by which we offered the enemy a pretext for war was to be scrupulously avoided because we were not then equal to England in war, and consequently, could not save our extensive foreign trade. The severing of this artery also became an essential reason for our losing the war in 1918. Things would have been just the same in 1904; above all we could not protect our trade and our existence by a victory over France alone. So long as things stood like this, it was madness to give the enemy pretexts for war. So long as the policy of encirclement persisted, there was actually only one way for us: to build a good fleet, to seek support, and to avoid friction.

If we could have succeeded in allaying the crisis in 1914, and if only we had been given two more years for the growth of our fleet, then, as I must repeat,

England's love of peace would probably have risen to the decisive point. Personally I am unable to get away from the dreadful fact that a more cautious policy, which had not made war so easy for the enemy in 1914, would probably have secured for ever our economic position which was already almost equivalent to that of the English, and would have brought our foreign trade and our whole national life a still more brilliant future instead of dreadful ruin.

In July, 1914, we could probably have blocked the way to the enemy's desire for war by a more skilful handling of the Serbian affair. Whether the world-war would have broken out in spite of this, say in 1916, who could prove? I personally am definitely persuaded that every year of peace gained at that time founded peace still more firmly, provided we always had at heart the serious position of our nation and gave corresponding attention to our armament. It is, to be sure, only men with a firm hand and a cool head, who are known to be able to carry through a war, that can also maintain peace in such acute situations. The man who works too strongly and too openly for an understanding moves away from peace, and he who does not uphold the dignity of the nation as high as possible is unavoidably brought by the hard selfishness of all neighbouring nations to a persistent decay of his nation's welfare and prosperity.

The second mistake in judgment I consider to be in the fact that the Austro-Serbian conflict and the world-war were not kept sufficiently sharply divided

from one another. Not only the German nation, which is on the whole one of the most peace-loving in the world, but Bethmann-Hollweg's Government also, is perfectly innocent of the world-war so far as its own will is concerned. On the other hand this German Government had a share in the development of the Austro-Serbian affair, for it assumed (what has proved to be wrong) that the *castigation of Serbia* by Austria-Hungary *would prevent* the threatening disintegration of the Hapsburg Monarchy and the *world-war* which, in their opinion, must necessarily have proceeded from such an eventuality.

How is the whole question of guilt then to be answered?

The *causa remota* of the world-war lies, according to the judgment of all honest observes of European events—the Belgian Ambassador for example—in the English policy of encirclement which originated in the 'nineties in trade jealousy, then hid behind pretexts (Transvaal, Navy), poisoned the press of the world, linked up all the anti-German forces in the world, and created a tense atmosphere in which the slightest mistake could cause a most terrible explosion.

The mistake of our Government lay in the belief that an Austro-Serbian passage-of-arms could be localized. Confiding in the peaceableness and justice of England in particular, it considered a thorough correction of Serbia to be necessary for the restoration of Austria-Hungary to health, without a world-war arising therefrom. Everything in the actions of our

Government which might be interpreted as war-agitation by the enemy refers principally to Serbia and to the desire to preserve Austria from adopting a weak attitude towards this rapacious little State. Terror overcame the Chancellor when the Russian war-party seized on his mistake, and he became aware that his steadfast belief in England's peacable intentions had deceived him. Under the hypnosis of this faith he had not even prepared our country for a world-war. In the above-mentioned conversation between the Chancellor and Wangenheim, according to the latter's version of April 23rd, 1914, Bethmann also spoke about "policy without war" and the dangers of a preventive war, and he stated that our national capital was increasing so rapidly that in ten or fifteen years we should have outstripped all other nations. Then we should have had an assured place in world-politics, which were ultimately the politics of economics. It would be our task to get through this period without any great conflicts.

Thus thought the Chancellor, who three months later dealt with the Serbian affair alone with the Foreign Office, in the absence of the chief military representative. A man who thinks like this is not contriving a world-war. The Chancellor naturally knew that a sharp Austrian ultimatum was to demand satisfaction from Serbia, even though he did not know the text of it. But it is a lie on the part of our enemies to say that Bethmann intended by this means to break the peace of the world. It was on the contrary his

hope, although short-sighted enough, not only to maintain, but permanently to secure the peace of the world by his procedure.

Nobody knows the wrong conclusion of our Government with regard to England and their lack of skill in foreign politics better than I do. I can therefore confirm perhaps better than others on this account the fact that the Government was not driven to take its false steps by a desire for war, but by a fear of war. Their short-sightedness, not their ill-will, assisted the English policy of encirclement to its success just before the door was shut. Bethmann and Jagow had thought to be able to strengthen Austria by means of a diplomatic demonstration. When they saw that it had failed and that war threatened, they were themselves horrified at what they had done. How can one speak on the question of guilt without placing this most important fact in the foreground? The mistakes of our leaders weigh lightly from a moral point of view in comparison with the enemy's attitude. Whoever is acquainted with the reports of the Belgian Ambassador and the innumerable documents on Russia's preparations for war, and has followed the general development of the last two decades, must ask himself in amazement how the opinion could possibly arise that Germany was the guilty party in the world-war.

By its attitude in 1919 the Entente has itself given judgment for every survivor—perhaps one may no longer count upon the present generation, over-fed as

it has been with lies. With devilish ferocity a whole nation, which would in itself be innocent of any mistakes on the part of its Government, has been subjected by the English, the French, and their following, to the most grievous tortures in body and soul that ever a nation in the Christian West has had to suffer. A master nation is to be reduced to a pariah, robbed of the dignity of humanity, and only left a hungry scanty prison-existence, just enough to allow it to give service and tribute to its slave-masters for an unlimited time. And why?

In September, 1912, Sassonov was in London. I take the following excerpt, to which I have referred above, from his report to the Czar, published by the *Pravda,* and give it in this connection:

"Grey declared without hesitating that if the circumstances in question were to come to pass, England would do her utmost to inflict the most sensible blow upon German power.

"The King, who touched upon this same question in one of his conversations, expressed himself much more emphatically than his Minister. With evident excitement His Majesty mentioned Germany's striving to become Great Britain's equal with regard to sea-power, and he explained that in the event of a conflict this would have fatal consequences not only for the German navy, but also for German trade at sea, for the English would sink every German ship which came into their hands.

"These latter words apparently reflect not only the personal feelings of His Majesty, but also the prevalent feeling in England with regard to Germany."

When the British statesmen encouraged the Russians in this case, as so often in the years before the war under the usual pretext of the navy scare, that they could build upon a steadfast desire in England to annihilate Germany, they knew with 100 per cent. certainty that the Emperor and Bethmann-Hollweg were striving for nothing but peace; they also knew just as certainly that a war-party, which was attaining the strongest influence, existed both in St. Petersburg and Paris, and they patronized them with all means in their power. At that time there was spreading in Entente countries an atmosphere that made wide circles of public opinion feel that war was inevitable; this atmosphere also sprang from the Entente countries over to Germany, and produced here the anxiety which I find for example in a letter from our naval attaché in Tokio of June 10th, 1914, expressed in these words:

"I am struck by the certainty with which everybody here considers the war against Germany assured in the near future . . . that scarcely tangible but yet so clearly perceptible something that lies in the air here like the kind of pity over a sentence of death not yet pronounced."

If the archives of the Entente were opened before the most incriminating documents have disappeared from them, the friends of humanity in England and America would be staggered by the most murderous of all lies with which they could indict their own

Governments, who imputed to Germany desires of world-conquest, of which nobody in Germany had dreamed in 1914, in order to render the annihilation, disintegration, plundering, and outlawry of the German nation palatable to their own peoples. In 1914 the German nation had outstripped the English in many matters of economics which England regarded as her domain. In trade with many countries Germany was already ahead of England, as well as in the production of steel and other things. In this economic race for the first place, we were inexperienced politically and easily vulnerable; since 1909 we were obviously badly led. The giant Germany could and was to receive the deadly blow, the knock-out, which was to make him a dwarf again. As soon as Bismarck had given us a State, we had by German diligence caught up and out-stripped all other nations in economic prosperity. Thereby we became a nuisance to others; what right had we to disturb the fat livings of the older World-Powers? England and France have pursued the aim of *Germaniam esse delendam* with Roman severity, and thanks to our mistakes they have achieved it. They stand there to-day as successful culprits, who have thrown off the mask now that they have made good their schemes. If the German people had realized in time the whole risk of Bismarck's creation, they would not have made themselves defenceless and thereby have accomplished the enemy's desires. We were too careless epigones. But now we experience the sight of the wolves who

are devouring the sheep playing the part of judges over this "criminal" victim.

I can produce yet another valid proof that our Government did not want the war. It was convinced from the very beginning that we should not win. Now one can indeed credit the Government with great lack of skill, but never with the criminal action of desiring a war when it itself was most deeply convinced of its hopelessness. Scarcely anybody in Germany could rightly understand before the outbreak of war, and after it, how great the danger actually was. We were partly wrapped up in *bona fide* illusions, and partly rather supercilious. A materialistic view of life or inherited party feelings clouded the vision of many. Thus we omitted to do what would save us. This incompetence is our guilt.

VI

On July 27th, when I arrived in Berlin, there still existed, so far as I now see the situation, a bare possibility of bringing the ship of peace past the rocks and getting her clear of them. At the time I had a false picture of the situation just like the Emperor, who had returned home of his own accord against the Chancellor's wishes, and my ministerial colleagues who were streaming to Berlin. The key to the understanding of it now got lost in the Wilhelmstrasse. I heard of Russia's preparations and I now believed that I must interpret the chance of mobilization of the English fleet, which had been going on for months, as a

threatening measure. Over Bethmann's action to save peace at this stage, there were written the words, as so often before: "Too late by half."

Early on July 28th the Chief of the Naval Cabinet, von Müller, visited me and gave vent to his horror at his most recent experiences with Bethmann. He considered a change of Chancellor and the substitution of Hintze for Jagow to be unavoidable. Müller did not review the actual situation.

As soon as the Emperor arrived in Berlin he developed a feverish activity to maintain peace. The Chancellor had not known how to keep the Emperor really in touch with events. The Emperor found it difficult to find a clear starting-point for effective diplomatic action. He said he didn't know what the Austrians wanted; the Serbs had conceded everything but a few bagatelles; since July 5th the Austrians had said nothing about their intentions.

This statement was made in the evening of July 29th in the Neues Palais at Potsdam, whither the Emperor had invited the military chiefs in order to inform them of his negotiations with the Chancellor, who had collapsed completely. We had no idea at that time of the doubts which Bethmann must have had about his policy during the first weeks in July. We only saw with consternation what was taking place before our eyes, including the Emperor's, who expressed himself without reserve regarding Bethmann's incompetence, as he had done many times before; he gave the opinion, however, that he could not separate

himself from this man now, as he enjoyed the confidence of Europe. The Emperor informed the company that the Chancellor had proposed that in order to keep England neutral we should sacrifice the German fleet for an agreement with England, which he, the Emperor, had refused to do. Consequently after his return from Potsdam on the evening of the 29th, the Chancellor had to put some restraint upon himself with regard to the fleet, when he summoned the British Ambassador to him and made high offers for England's neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war. The offers he put forward on this occasion, as well as the cutting reply given him by Sir Edward Grey, are known from the English Blue Book (Nos. 85, 101). The public, however, did not know that the Chancellor was prepared once more, as in 1912, to sacrifice the German fleet in the strange conviction that England would then consent to a German victory over France. The attempts at capitulation began therefore even before the war, and when there was still time to prevent it. The Chancellor had two unhappy ideas: the Austrians must march into Serbia, and the German fleet stands in the way of England's love. In the event of his Belgrade policy giving the enemy an opportunity for war, he was now covered at any rate: the German fleet was to blame for everything. The Chancellor's naval policy of July 29th, as well as that of 1911-12, unfortunately cast its shadow across the war; for our conduct of the war at sea, as it was desired and carried out by the Chancellor, meant at bottom

nothing less than the slow sacrifice of Germany's navy and future, which he had been forbidden to give up at one stroke.

That day Prince Henry arrived in Potsdam from England with the message from George V that England would remain neutral in the event of war. I doubted this, whereupon the Emperor replied: "I have the word of a king, and that is sufficient for me."

The confusion which agitated all Europe and prevented anybody from reviewing the whole situation seemed to clear favourably on July 30th. England agreed to a proposal of mediation from the German Emperor which had been accepted in Vienna also. A complete material agreement had been arrived at between us and London. I learnt this on July 30th at midday by a letter from the Emperor, which enabled me to breathe again.

In the early hours of July 31st, however, I learnt from the Admiralty Staff that in the Foreign Office the war was regarded as inevitable, and that Jagow had asked whether we were ready to attack the English fleet.

The contradiction was cleared up for me when I received the news of the Russian mobilization between noon and one o'clock.

At half-past twelve the Chancellor had sent for me, and when I saw him he had the Imperial order for the "threatening state of war." I drew Bethmann's attention to the agreement that had been effected be-

tween us and London, and I read to him the Emperor's letter of which he did not know anything. The Chancellor thought that the Emperor was confusing several things. The Russian mobilization, he said, would be such an unheard-of proceeding against us that we could not put up with it; if Russia continued, we must also begin to mobilize, and an ultimatum had had to be dispatched to the Czar so as not to bring our mobilization too much in arrears. That was my view too. The blood-guilt of those responsible for the Russian mobilization is not lessened by any bungling on the part of our Government. In spite of the agreement which had been established at the eleventh hour between us and England, the Russian mobilization had made war inevitable unless a miracle happened. Longer hesitation on our part would have delivered our territory to the enemy, and would have been inexcusable. In reality the Russians had been mobilizing since the 25th, and this advance did us considerable harm when the machines of war began to move. I gave the Chancellor to understand, however, that it seemed to me right to stress more in the ultimatum the fact that positive agreement existed, and a favourable mediation was in progress. The Chancellor replied with some warmth that this had been said all along and Russia had just answered it by mobilizing.

I often wondered later whether the Emperor ought not to have sent somebody to St. Petersburg in time. The most suitable man for this purpose, Hintze, was,

to be sure, in Mexico. I knew definitely, however, that the Czar appreciated the point of view that Germany and Russia could gain nothing by tearing one another to pieces, but at the best a third person would do so. It was naturally too late to send anybody on July 31st. It may also happen that I shall be told that I over-estimated the power of the Czar, and under-estimated Pan-Slavism. I can only state here that, following my instinct more than my reason, I advised the Chancellor to insert a peaceable paragraph into the ultimatum. I scarcely hoped thereby to hold back the wheel of fate which the Russian mobilization had set in motion, but in any case to shift the responsibility for all that was coming more exclusively upon the enemy.

On August 1st I learnt in the Federal Council that we had sent a declaration of war against Russia after the ultimatum. I considered that very unfavourable for Germany. In my opinion we ought to have turned to account diplomatically the advantage that we were militarily on the defensive with regard to Russia, by leaving the declaration of war to the Russians. We ought not to have inspired the moujik with a conviction that the Emperor intended to attack the White Czar. The depreciation of our alliance treaty with Roumania was also of importance. This treaty, just like that with Italy, had been made by Prince Bismarck for defence; both States were only pledged to help us if Russia or France attacked us. By our declaration of war on Russia we formally gave the Rou-

manians the right to leave us alone in the war, just as we did to the Italians later by our declaration of war on France. Did not Bethmann really consider the enormous disadvantages which were created for us by our not leaving the act of declaration of war to the enemy?

I had the impression that our action even in this direction was completely unconsidered, and took place without any system, and my feelings revolted at our having to assume the odium of the attacking party in the face of the world, on account of the jurists of the Foreign Office, although we could not at all intend to march into Russia, and although we were in reality the attacked party. I therefore asked the Chancellor, as the meeting broke up, why the declaration of war had to coincide with our mobilization?

The Chancellor replied that this was necessary because the army would immediately send troops over the frontier. The reply astonished me, because at the most it could only be a question of patrols. But through all these days Bethmann was so agitated and overstrained that it was impossible to speak with him. I can still hear him as he repeatedly stressed the absolute necessity of the declaration of war, with his arms uplifted, and consequently cut short all further discussion.

When I asked Moltke afterwards the actual relation between the crossing of the frontier and our declaration of war, he denied any intention of sending troops over the frontier forthwith. He also told me that he

attached no value to the declaration of war from his own point of view.

Thus the riddle, why we declared war first, remains unsolved for me. It is to be assumed that we did it out of formal legal conscientiousness. The Russians began the war without any declaration, but we believed that we could not defend ourselves without such a statement. Outside Germany there is no appreciation of such ideas.

Summoned to the Castle in the afternoon for the signing of the mobilization order by the Emperor, I arrived late in consequence of a break-down in the traffic, after the order had already been signed. I heard, however, that a Russian acceptance of our declaration of war had not yet arrived, and I therefore made a last attempt with my suggestion that there was still time, until the Russians had acknowledged our declaration of war, to send a gentler message after it. I was unable to rid myself of the impulse to at least shift from ourselves the odium of the declaration of war, although the last spark of any possibility of peace was really extinguished. I therefore asked whether hostilities were to be opened on our side without the Russian Government's acceptance, for in view of our advance in the west, our movements in the east could only consist of bluffs and demonstrations. As our patrols, according to Moltke, would not cross the Russian frontier for some days, we did not yet need to stand there as the attacker.

My question was overwhelmed by the arrival of a dispatch from Lichnowsky which impelled us to make a last effort for peace. I actively supported Bethmann in this, and later in reply to his question whether we could promise the English not to attack the French coast, I answered in the affirmative, and recommended him to include the offer in his speech to the Reichstag. This peace-move was condemned to failure owing to a misunderstanding on Lichnowsky's part, although he at least proved once again that Germany did not want the war. During the night of August 1st-2nd, the dispute about our declaration of war, this time with regard to France, was repeated in the Chancellor's house. The Chancellor opined that we must declare war upon France immediately, because we wanted to march through Belgium. I interjected that I had not understood why the declaration of war on Russia had been made public at the same time as the mobilization; I said that I could see no advantage in launching the declaration of war against France before we marched into France. I referred to reports from the Ambassador in London, according to which the advance through Belgium would immediately result in war with England, and I touched upon the question as to whether it was possible for the army to retard the march through Belgium. Moltke declared that there was no other way. I got the impression that it was impossible to interfere in the machinery of transport. I declared that we must then reckon on immediate war with England. Every day would be

a gain for the mobilization of the navy. Therefore the intimation to Belgium must be delayed as much as possible. I was promised that it should wait until the second day of mobilization, but this was not done. I did not know then that on July 29th Bethmann-Hollweg had revealed to the British Ambassador, and consequently to all the Entente Powers and Belgium, the possibility of military operations taking place in Belgium. This had been done with the idea of preserving a confidential relationship with England in spite of the war on the Continent.

The impression of the stupidity of our political leadership became more and more disquieting. The march through Belgium did not seem to have been an established fact hitherto to the Government. Since the Russian mobilization the Chancellor gave one the impression of a drowning man.

Whilst the lawyers of the Foreign Office immersed themselves in the academic question as to whether we were now at war with Russia or not, it came out that they had forgotten to ask Austria whether she would fight with us against Russia. This had now to be done. Italy likewise had not been informed of our declaration of war against Russia.[1] When we went

[1] At that time I could not foresee that Austria would consider her own declaration of war on Russia for some length of time, and thereby give us some bad hours. As late as the morning of August 5th, the Admiralty urged the Foreign Office, in writing, to obtain Austria's declaration of war on account of our ships in the Mediterranean. Moltke told me to my horror that if the Austrians drew back we should have to conclude a peace at any price. But the management of the Serbian affair had been thoroughly inadequate. The diplomatic situation was

out, the military expressed their indignation to me about the condition of the political leadership. None the less I was troubled by a feeling that the General Staff was not correctly estimating the meaning of a war against England and was heedlessly going on with the war against France because this apparently meant only a short war. The decisions of the hour were never guided by previously considered politico-strategical plans of mobilization for the whole war.

When the Emperor realized the failures of his efforts for peace, he was stirred to the very depths. An old confidential friend of his who saw much of him during the first days of August declared that he had never seen such a tragic and disturbed face as that of the Emperor at that time.

The agitated discussions between Bethmann and Moltke were continued in the Emperor's presence in the Castle on August 2nd, myself being present. Moltke attached no value to a formal declaration of war on France. He pointed to a series of hostile acts on the part of the French, which had been reported to him; the war, he said, was actually here and its development could not be withheld. I represented again

made more difficult by Austria declaring war on Serbia without invading the country, and negotiating about a pledge which she did not possess. If they intended to invade the country, they would have had to occupy Belgrade the moment the ultimatum expired, before the Serbs had time to blow up the Semlin Bridge, and to negotiate after the pledge had been seized. Thus we had not Austria in our hands, either with regard to the ultimatum or with regard to the world-war. I will not speak here about our omissions with regard to Italy. Afterwards I did everything I could, so far as my position allowed, to secure the sending of Prince Bülow to Rome.

and again that I could not understand why a declaration of war had to be sent to France at all, for it would always have an aggressive flavour; the army could march up to the French frontier without such things.

The Chancellor declared that he could not hand over our terms to Belgium without a declaration of war on France. I have never been able to understand this reason.

The Belgian question ought to have made our diplomacy tread with particular caution from the very beginning. The General Staff had for decades considered the possibility of an invasion through Belgium all the more seriously since the French policy of revenge began to support itself on the Russian armies. There could not exist a doubt in the whole world that the French were at least intellectually the aggressors in a Franco-German war. In warding off a French war of revenge, which threatened us on the Vistula just as much as on the Meuse and the Moselle, our march through neutral Belgium could only be justified in the eyes of the world if the political offensive of France against us was made as clear as day.

Those who were specially engaged on this question in the General Staff, who naturally were especially conscious of the terrible gravity of Germany's position, had been led to the conviction by many symptoms during the few years before the war, that the French and the English would march through Belgium to attack the Rhineland. As a matter of fact, the French in

1914 attacked in Lorraine, just as Schlieffen had always prophesied. But we had proofs at our disposal that the Western Powers had Belgium in view as the theatre of war. Moreover, there were voluminous signs of a leaning on the part of influential Belgian circles towards the Entente, both politically and militarily, even before the Belgian archives were opened. As the Chancellor then must have been informed on the Belgian question, it was his duty to make the corresponding diplomatic preparations for the march through Belgium, which the General Staff considered to be necessary to meet a Franco-Russian attack. Nothing was done in this direction. Politically Germany's strategical offensive through Belgium was a matter for the gravest misgiving; this could only be allayed if our policy clearly convinced the world, with redoubled caution and skill, that we were *politically* on the defensive. If, however, we gave ourselves the false appearance of being the aggressors politically, then the invasion of Belgium, which was actually a pure emergency measure, appeared in the fateful light of a brutal act of violence. The enemy received overwhelming material for slandering us, if after the ultimatum to Serbia, after the refusal of Grey's proposal of a conference, after a formal declaration of war on Russia and France, we proceeded to march through Belgium. How doubtful and ambiguous was Belgian neutrality and its armed defence by England! It was only our complete lack of political skill that wove the legendary martyr's crown for this country.

We were to the fore in everything, as though we wanted to facilitate the enemy's schemes. The General Staff was not the authority to take the sole responsibility of judging the political reaction of strategic necessities. The " wrong " done to Belgium, which Bethmann revealed, gave the enemy, however, the desired confirmation of their calumnies against us and further confused our own nation's feeling of justice in the most baneful manner.

I only arrived at these reflections on the Belgian question during the war, as I was not informed on anything to do with this matter in time of peace or at the outbreak of the war. The diplomatic mistakes, however, which we made when opening our operations in the west were straightway clear to me during that conference.

After the Chancellor had left the meeting, Moltke complained to the Emperor of the " deplorable " state of the political leadership, which had made no preparations for the situation and was now still thinking of nothing but legal Notes, although the avalanche was on the move.

I declared to the Emperor that in my opinion the Foreign Office had not functioned for many years; it had, however, not been my affair to advise the Emperor in this matter; but the gravity of the hour impelled me to over-step for once the limits of my authority. I concluded: " The Chancellor is my superior, and I am not here to judge him; but let Your Majesty recall Hintze and put him in Jagow's place."

Hintze was actually recalled from Mexico and made his way to General Headquarters. From there, however, he was appointed to Peking at the instigation of the Foreign Office, and for a second time he had to betake himself round the world in disguise. He had had a number of experiences which, comparatively speaking, probably fitted him best of all for the purpose of making a separate peace with the Czar, which could have been obtained and would have decided the war in 1916.

VII

On August 6th I was visited by Jagow to impress upon me that the Admiralty should not give political information to the Emperor—which as a matter of fact had never happened.[1] I remonstrated with him on account of the complete *déroute* of the political leaders, who ought to have given the event of war a certain amount of preliminary consideration. Now we had to turn all the strength at our disposal against

[1] I have often been reproached with pursuing a policy of my own, and particularly with influencing politics by means of the information department. This is quite untrue; on the contrary, I have always imposed upon myself the greatest restraint in this matter, even during the war, as must be quite plain from the hitherto unknown information contained in these Memoirs. This still holds good if a zealous officer here and there in the information department should actually have overstepped the limits of his authority without my knowledge and against my wishes. Just as untrue is the assertion, with which Bethmann even used to work on the Emperor, that I had any connection with or influence on that excellent writer, Count E. zu Reventlow, during the war, although this gentleman, together with Rohrbach and Jackh, placed their journalistic talents at the disposal of my deputy when the war began.

the mightiest of our enemies. In reply to my question, what would happen if we beat France and Russia but not England, Jagow shrugged his shoulders. The conflict of opinion came to the surface when I said: "Couldn't you promise Russia the passage of the Dardanelles and anything they like, to prevent the war?" Jagow replied: "If you had only brought us a little naval agreement with England, the war would not have been necessary."

After all that the Foreign Office must have known relating to the outbreak of war, it needed some boldness to describe the German navy as the cause of the war. But henceforward the Chancellor and the Foreign Office applied considerable care and tenderness to the spreading of this legend. This joined hands with the far more fateful campaign against the German fleet, to withhold it from striking in the war.

If Germany's armies had marched into Belgium and France, indeed if we had wrestled successfully with Russia and France, a Germany without a fleet would still have had England for an enemy. In keeping with her traditional policy, England would never have suffered our superiority on the Continent, even if she had had no formal *ententes* with the other Powers. If the German fleet played any part at all in the general situation of July, 1914, it acted as a brake on England's temptation to go to war and caused Grey's efforts to maintain peace. England's attitude during the years when we had no fleet, or when our fleet was

weak, proves that she would not have passed over even then any opportunities that were offered of striking us down with foreign help, and of preventing our hegemony—indeed, that she would probably have seized them more readily than when she set the instrument of the *ententes* in motion against us in 1914. I am saying things that are self-evident, but the eager tendency of the Germans to self-annihilation enabled the Chancellor and his helpmates in the autumn of 1914 to sow suspicion against Germany's sole means of salvation at that time—the fleet. The result of this was to obliterate in the minds of many people all traces of those weeks of July, the real origin of the war. Soon I heard from a reliable source that an understanding had been effected between the Chancellory and the editors of certain newspapers, by which I was to be regarded as being to blame for the war. Undiscerning Germans were soon imitating the enemy and saying that autocracy and a military caste had caused this war; and those persons who were in reality, though not consciously, the prime movers in the destruction of the Monarchy and who shook the foundations of German strength and independence, pressed forward after the Revolution for the ostensible purpose of telling the "truth" before a State tribunal.

The ambiguity of Bethmann's policy in July, 1914, has not only worsened our diplomatic position in the war and at the conclusion of peace, but it has also strengthened the German tendency towards self-hu-

miliation in a degree which threatens to overshadow the whole distant future of our nation. For the enemy, who wanted to put the blame for the war upon the German people found ready agents in the very bosom of the German people to persuade us that we had started the war. I have hinted at the mistakes of German policy during these weeks, and they are not to be glossed over. But we are not to blame for the war. Those in authority in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg are solely to blame for the war, as well as for the barbarous way in which it was conducted. Besides, how could there be the slightest doubt about it? How can the German nation forget that the Belgian Ambassadors, keener-eyed than the German diplomats, unmistakably revealed, several years before the war, the Entente's will-to-war and the conspiracy that it had woven around Germany? The Entente's guilt is also established in its deeds. The Entente, which tore Alsace-Lorraine from the German motherland; which made the German people the hirelings of Anglo-Saxon capitalism, and wanted to dissolve the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and annihilate the Turkish Empire; which fought with sword, hunger, internment, theft of trade, and moral poison, until the death of our nation was sealed; which translated immediately into fact the enmity that it had shown for decades, as soon as the negotiations of July, 1914, offered a particularly favourable opportunity,—this Entente will not be able, by hypocritically turning to advantage our unhappy policy, to avoid for ever the judgment of

the history of the world upon the crime that it has committed on the spirit of humanity.

VIII

I have expressed myself so definitely in this statement because official quarters are still endeavouring to obliterate the mistakes that have been made. The moral guiltlessness of our Government at that time can, however, only be made clear by a frank statement of their diplomatic inadequacy; and only by this means can it be proved historically that the Emperor had no share in the mistakes made by the Government. If other authorities committed errors, this was not due to a desire for war, which they lacked altogether, but to an absence of clear, straight thinking.

Our nation now streamed to the colours, and in the jubilant spirit of sacrifice of August, 1914, and in the fullness of strength of the Prusso-German State that will never be witnessed again by German eyes, sought to ward off the attack which a short-sighted diplomacy had enabled our watching neighbours to make. National spirit was then on the rise, a fact which was proved by the German nation in 1911, when it refused to allow itself to be pacified by a weak Government in the matter of the insult that was offered it. It proved it again with moving power when the Emperor sent forth the call to arms. Our nation did not know at that time what mistakes our political leaders had made, and under what unfavourable conditions it was going into an unprepared war. It knew

that it was free from blame, and was so in reality. But none of the innumerable peace offers of our Government moved England to mercy, after she had realized the weakness of our Government and had deduced from this the certainty of our defeat in spite of Germany's great strength and health at that time.

And yet the world-coalition would not have succeeded in conquering us, in spite of its unparalleled superiority, if our inner unity had been upheld with those means which corresponded to the traditions of our fathers and the danger of the hour. No matter what heroism was shown by our troops, the hereditary faults of the people and the destructive elements were fostered by the Government at home, until England's desire was fulfilled and the most prosperous and best nation on earth had been reduced to the lowest level.

So the old pirate State, England, has again succeeded in letting Europe tear herself to pieces, and by throwing in her own power and applying the most brutal methods, she has secured a victory which accords with her material interests. The liberty and independence of the people of the European continent has now vanished and the bloom of their civilization is perhaps destroyed for ever.

But England's day of judgment will have its birth in this very success.

302 L7 M8957
02/29/16 320005 SELB
TFGroup

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
3 3127 00263 7137
APR 3 2016
DATE DUE
WITHDRAWN

MY MEMOIRS

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND LIBRARY

MY MEMOIRS

BY

GRAND ADMIRAL
VON TIRPITZ

VOLUME II

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1919

COPYRIGHT, 1919
By DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY, INC.

The Quinn & Boden Company
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
RAHWAY NEW JERSEY

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

CHAPTER XVII

MAIN QUESTIONS OF THE WAR

PAGE

1. Military opening.—2. The question of the principal enemy.—3. Our weapons against England.—4. The possibility of a separate peace with Russia.—5. The ideas of the war.—6. Home policy in the war.—7. The Fatherland Party.—8. At the collapse 1

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HIGH SEA FLEET IN THE WAR

1. The navy at the beginning of the war.—2. The achievements of the navy.—3. The plan of operations.—4. My verdict.—5. The crippling of the fleet.—6. The lack of a Supreme Command.—7. The Battle of Jutland.—8. The last phase 74

CHAPTER XIX

THE SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

1. The cause of the declaration of the war zone.—2. The first reverse.—3. *Lusitania* and *Arabic*.—4. To and fro.—5. My resignation.—6. *Sussex*.—7. The unrestricted submarine campaign, 1917.—8. The sum total . . . 137

EPILOGUE

APPENDIX I

Extracts from my letters written during the war . . . 216

APPENDIX II

Remarks on our shipbuilding policy 389

MY MEMOIRS

plan of campaign, which was unknown to me before the outbreak of war, was absolutely right as a result of the increasing technical developments towards trench-warfare, and in view of our political situation in the world. At any rate it ought to have been carried out by those who possessed the genius completely to control such a gigantic operation and the incidents which it would naturally entail. Our army leaders could not estimate too generously the coefficient of safety for the enormous circular movement; but they ran it too finely. The army was kept too small in time of peace, and the fatal omission was made of not drawing sufficiently on Germany's defensive powers. At the end of 1911 the Chancellor introduced an Army Bill. This, however, was not big enough, and the 1913 Bill came too late to take full effect during the war. I myself had proposed to the Minister of War, von Heeringen, at a suggestion from Admiral von Müller just before Christmas, 1911, that together with me he should insist upon the immediate introduction of a Defence Bill, and I expressed my readiness to subordinate my demands to those of the army. The opinion at General Headquarters in the autumn of 1914 was that the war against France would have been won if the two army corps had been there which the General Staff had allowed itself to be done out of in 1911-12, contrary to the demands of its experts. In addition there was the under-estimation of the British army, which our public still liked to imagine as the Aldershot Tommies

with their little caps and swagger canes. When I warned the Chief of the General Staff, after war had broken out, against rating these troops, which were almost all sergeants, too lightly, he replied: "We shall arrest them." In this hope he probably did not foresee that he would have to detach two army corps from the right flank for the eastern front. Even in the late autumn of 1914 I encountered doubts at General Headquarters as to the seriousness of the new Kitchener armies. In August, 1914, I wrote from Coblenz: "The difficulties will come when the army thinks it is over the hill."

At that time it seemed to be more important than anything else to cut through the English lines of communication and to get to Calais. Everything else would have been easier for us, if only we had compelled the English by cutting off the Channel Ports to transport their troops to Cherbourg or even Brest, across the Atlantic therefore instead of an inland sea, and this would have put quite a different face upon the war in France.

It was in vain that I urged Moltke to do this, and even Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who shared my opinion, could not do so. I could not obtain any influence over Falkenhayn's decisions. My desire to cut the English lines of communication would only have been possible from the sea, in my opinion, by engaging the High Sea fleet and not by isolated sorties of lighter craft. This was only one side of my demands for the use of the fleet. It is confirmed at this

moment (beginning of 1919) by Lord Haldane, who, according to newspaper reports, indicated in a letter to *The Times,* as a mistake of German strategy, the fact that "it hesitated to make immediate use of its submarines and torpedo boats to prevent the transportation of the British army after its mobilization on the morning of August 3rd." If we had systematically prepared for this, and then attempted it, the British High Sea fleet would undoubtedly have appeared, and the naval battle would then have developed, so much the better for its being so soon.

Moltke was a very sick man. The reins trailed on the ground, and the uniformity of the army's operations went to pieces. In spite of his unfortunate personality I had perfect confidence in Moltke. His successor did not give me the impression of having been trained to master the task, which the development of the war into a war of attrition increased beyond all bounds after the Battle of the Marne. Until then the army had been animated by one idea: Cannae. In the war of attrition, however, the superiority of the enemy, thanks to his mastery of the seas, was bound to bear fruit more and more. All victories on land trickled away owing to the unparalleled disadvantages of Germany's position. Wedged in between enemies on land, we could not even save ourselves by making ourselves unassailable like a hedgehog. For our life-threads ran across the seas. Therefore only the greatest boldness and resoluteness could save us. Land war must also adjust itself to the general aim. After

the Battle of the Marne the army had to revise its methods. The Supreme Command at that time allowed the big aims to go begging. Hindenburg and Ludendorff, however, who offered a prospect of annihilating the Russian armies in 1915 by turning their flank at Kovno, and consequently did not agree with the frontal attack at Gorlice, were not allowed to carry out their scheme. If it had been successful, their position would certainly have dominated that of General Headquarters. In war, a definite great political aim is needed, towards which one can proceed with concentrated politico-military forces. And indeed the chief enemy decides in the war. Partial victories over lesser opponents are at best only means to the end. There ought to be only one real aim: . . . to strike at the heart of the Coalition. Our fate depended on our recognizing this objective.

But who was our main opponent? To me, without doubt, he who had the greatest resources and the highest determination. London, which had always been the political nerve-centre of the Entente, became ever more definitely the military centre also. It let no real opportunity slip, not even the construction of a new Eastern Front in the year 1918. While London stood, no victory over the Russians could be regarded as more than a partial victory, serving merely to render possible the swift conclusion of a separate peace with the Czar and thus to free our strength for employment against the chief enemy.

The dismemberment of the Czar's empire, the aim

of our diplomacy and democracy, was of no help to us if we could not wound the chief enemy.

II

Our national sentiment shows a sound judgment in attributing not to our military leaders but to the statesman Bismarck the chief credit for the successful wars which have made Germany free, united, and prosperous. As long as our people remained sound and loyal, and our defence impenetrable, as was the case in the first years of the world-war, our statesmen had political military and naval material enough to enable them to emerge with honour from the war with England into which we had fallen. The army, which in its own particular domain was not drilled to fight the English, under-estimated these as it were unattainable enemies. I was attacked as a pessimist, and the saying at the "Lion d'Or" at Charleville ran: "There isn't an officer in G.H.Q. who doesn't think the war will be over before April 1st, 1915, except the Naval Secretary of State." In the Anglo-Saxon world I was regarded as an opponent whose isolation in the German Government was most welcome; for this quite comprehensible predominance of the "dry-land" point of view in the army would have been quite harmless, if only the Chancellor had been on my side. The war could not be won, even in a military sense, without a sound policy which gave due weight to the naval position. If the Chancellor had really understood the nature of the war, the army would have been

ready to attach more importance, at the very beginning of the campaign, to the English lines of communications; and in that case we should have carried out the offensive measures at sea which form the subject of this and the following chapters.

On August 19th, 1914, I said to the Chancellor, in the presence of Moltke and Jagow:

"Whatever we achieve against Russia is not an embarrassment but a relief to England. Conditions have forced us to fight on a front which is not in accordance with our political interests. The Russo-German War is very popular in England. The English statesmen are absolutely determined to hold out to the end. We can only save our future by pressure on England. The decision of the war turns exclusively on whether Germany or England can hold out the longer. It is absolutely necessary to occupy Calais and Boulogne."

This point of view seemed unintelligible to the Chancellor. He held that, even if the war went favourably for us in the West, we ought to limit our activities there and direct our full strength to the East. As early as the first half of August, he had remarked to a mutual acquaintance: "The war with England is only a thunderstorm, and will pass over quickly. Relations afterwards will be better than ever." Bethmann's policy was to reach an understanding with England, and he accordingly held it right, even in actual warlike operations, to handle that country gently. To him, England was "a bulldog,

which must not be irritated." He was still seeking for the hand of friendship, which he had not found in Grey's proposal of a conference. He failed to realize that England, now that it had once come into the war, was clearly, coolly, and consistently bent on winning it. The dry-land point of view of the army, a certain weakness of the Emperor, and the hazy political views of wide circles in Germany, enabled the Chancellor time and time again to rebuild his fallen house of cards. He never forgot the peaceable attitude shown by Grey in the first half of July, and as he had never understood that the reason of this attitude was simply the grave risks inseparable from naval warfare, he assumed that it was still present now that England had made up her mind to come into the war, and had had her prospects of victory strengthened by the manner in which the war had actually broken out, by our failure to occupy the Channel coast, by the inactivity of our navy, and by the events of the Marne. As I have already said, England was following her old traditions in seeking to increase her predominance by war against whichever continental power is the strongest for the time being. Puritanically pharisaical, the practical and utilitarian British politicians, dominated by the interests of Anglo-Saxon capitalism, were absolutely united in their determination to fight Germanism all the harder, and more mercilessly, just because up to July, 1914, it had been possible that we would win through in peace. How could anyone think that England would not use to the full the oppor-

tunity thus given to her, to strike down at the very last moment the competitor who had very nearly overtaken her in the race? As our lack of determination showed itself, England's determination increased; the influence of Lloyd George increased at Asquith's expense. With us, the opposite development was seen, the determined leaders being thrust into the background; such conduct was bound to lead to defeat.

Since 1911 our policy has consisted in chronic misunderstanding of England. This mistake was continued during the war. The Press were instructed not to speak too severely against England, these instructions being repeated again and again by the Foreign Office at the meetings of Press representatives in Berlin. The English of course were not ignorant of this, and drew their own conclusions, which were certainly not those which the dear German expected them to draw.

As our leaders were ignorant of the strength and determination of England, they half assumed that it did not exist, and never realized that we should have to accept defeat unless we succeeded in pressing her so hard that she would regard reconciliation as more to her advantage than the continuance of the fight. The knowledge of England, in spite of all our writers, from Gneisenau and Frederick List to Karl Peters and A. von Peez, had not penetrated our leaders. In the Bismarck period, which was largely used as a model for the present time, our policy was of necessity

based on different problems and conditions. Outside the navy, the power of England and her determination to beat us back were quite overlooked, and this all the more readily as we were wholly ignorant of the great means we already possessed for combating this determination. The navy was, however, still too young, and not sufficiently a part of the national life, to infect the people with its point of view. The ever-increasing isolation of the navy, which combined strong patriotism with international experience peculiarly useful for the world-war, showed that the nation, or at all events its upper classes, was not ripe for such a war. In the first months of the war, men from all circles of the people approached me with the request that I should send the fleet to battle; when later public opinion lost this enthusiasm, it was merely following the lead given by its political chiefs.

On August 27th and 28th, in connection with my plans for the formation of a corps of marines with a view to attacking England from Flanders, I once again urged the Chancellor to concentrate against England. It was even then almost incomprehensible to me how the war could be expected to be won against England on land alone; four weeks later, when the fighting fronts had begun to stiffen, the idea seemed absolutely utopian.

As I have stated, I stood alone in my views at General Headquarters, and especially among the diplomats. I could scarcely speak with anyone of my view of the position. Surrounded by these men, who

consciously or unconsciously agreed in their superficial optimism in differing from me, I often asked myself: "Have I been stricken with blindness, or have all these others? Do I take too gloomy a view? Have I really been deceiving myself all through my career as to England's stubborn determination to prevail?" Our leading circles were dull of comprehension in dealing with the nature of sea-power, and the fate that threatened us; they were unwilling to realize that England wanted to drive us off the seas. Not until events unfortunately proved me right did I fully understand the terrible meaning of that English phrase: "but you are not a sea-going nation."

Again and again I emphasized to the Chancellor that England would never stop fighting while any prospect remained of breaking our world-position. Our democrats, more than any of us, should have been afraid of this. Had not Lloyd George said: "I am not afraid of von Hindenburg, von Mackensen, and all the other Vons, but of the German workmen"? The longer the "knock-out" was delayed, the more dangerous it became for us, for the main weapon of the British, the fleet, could only work by long years of blockade. Even on land, after England had failed to gain a swift victory with other people's armies, years passed before she created one of her own. But, once England committed herself to this gigantic undertaking, which threatened her whole economic organization, it was certain that she would demand a reward commensurate with her efforts, in the assurance that

she need not fear a recovery of the German people for centuries to come.

To my urgent attempts to reason the Chancellor out of his false estimation and incorrect treatment of England, he returned, as his character was, no definite answer. There was no doubt, however, that he was clinging to his old ideas. When on August 19th he informed me that the British were diverting into English ports Dutch corn ships bound for Holland, I could not persuade him to expose this breach of neutrality in the manner proposed by me. Even then I said to him: "Every display of the desire to reach an understanding with England will simply work against an understanding and be regarded as weakness on our part. The utmost stubbornness in dealing with England is the only means of turning her from her present course."

I wish to state here that my advocacy of a determined conduct of the war against England in the years 1914 to 1918 never prevented the Government from seeking a peace of understanding with England. I am not seeking to defend myself, for the story spread among the masses, that I had prevented the Government from concluding an early peace with England, is too foolish to require any defence on my part. So far as I can tell, there never was in all those years a moment in which England would have given us any peace but that of destruction. My influence was never strong enough to have thwarted any possible peace, even if I had wished to do so, nor did the Chancellor

ever communicate to me any tangible possibility of peace. I am rather speaking simply from the point of view of political tactics, which of course became more and more important as our position changed for the worse. The moment when one desired to reach a tolerable peace of renunciation with England was just the very time in the war when it was most necessary to show a determined fighting front against England and to seek a rapprochement with Russia. Such a point of view in the matter of tactics is so simple and elementary that it is adopted by everybody but the Germans. In national questions of life and death, the German does not seem to have sufficient enthusiasm to bear this principle in mind.[1]

The last prospect of achieving a tolerable peace with England disappeared when we adopted the exactly opposite tactics of public peace offers. To show his goodwill, the German in international matters is quite ready to hand over his trumps in advance to his

[1] I could value it properly, even when it worked inconveniently for me. For example, a decade earlier, when the Navy League was making higher demands than I did myself, and was attacking me personally in a most unpleasant manner, its activities made it much more easy for me to have my more moderate programme carried through the Reichstag. It was with the same motive, with a view to giving the Government a tactical advantage by supplying the necessary support in a firm morale at home, that at a later stage the "Fatherland party" was founded. I have often been amazed, and am still amazed, that even intelligent men wholly failed to see the quietening effect produced abroad, and often regarded the Fatherland party as a mere breeding-ground of uncritical optimism. Its true meaning and purpose could only be understood by those who fully realized that we were fighting a foreign foe.

opponents, in the hope of making them more friendly disposed. From these peace offers onwards, the British statesmen watched with unerring certainty the progress of our internal crumbling. Natural instinct must show that it is wrong to strike the enemy with one hand only, while one strokes him with the other. That was, however, the line of conduct we followed, in order "not to irritate" the chief enemy. Anyone who understands the English knows that they can only be brought to reasonable terms by the utmost firmness and determination. How justly were we criticized by the Irish, the Indians, the Egyptians, and other enslaved peoples. They know by long and terrible experience the proper way to deal with the British. They hoped to realize their freedom through us, and now they saw how, by false tactics, we were placing ourselves under the control of the Anglo-Saxons while our fighting strength still stood unshaken.

When on September 4th, 1914, all the bourgeois parties of the Reichstag, then in complete unity, planned a telling demonstration against England, in the shape of a proposal for the increase of the fleet, of their own motion and wholly without any suggestion from me, the Chancellor prevented the proposal being brought forward. In such a war, such a policy of repressing national determination was nothing less than morbid.

When I learnt in the early part of November that the English, in order to block the entrance to the Channel, had established a war zone by laying mines

in the open waters of the North Sea, thus committing an exceptionally grave breach of the laws of the sea as they then stood, I could not persuade Jagow to adopt the declaration of protest which I drew up. In lieu of this, the Foreign Office, with the aid of the Naval Staff, which had never previously had experience of such matters, drew up a declaration which may have appealed to specialists in international law, but which was in general of more harm than good, as its meticulous and juristical arguments served to throw doubt on our adherence to the rules of international law, which up to that time we had observed with the greatest strictness. It had no effect because it did not contain any reservation of the right to use reprisals.

New proofs were continually arising to show that it would have been better to show a determined front against England. For this reason there was anxiety in England lest the Chancellor might fall, and a stronger hand take up his work; for this reason the exchanges rose in London when I resigned. The English worked skilfully to retain the Chancellor in office. Since they had obtained in 1911 and 1912 an insight into his manner of doing business, he seemed to them to offer the best guarantee of their victory. Accordingly, wide circles in Germany looked on Bethmann as Europe's man of confidence, and our democrats, to whom for other reasons his weakness and confusion were necessary, willingly fostered this belief. It is tragic to reflect that this man, who had destroyed our prestige and by his diplomacy had given to the

world the deadliest weapons against us, should be thought capable of bringing the English into a lenient frame of mind. The Emperor, however, thought himself compelled to stand by the man who appealed to the German democrats and the English. Thus did Bethmann retain his office, in spite of his failure through three long years of war to provide any evidence that England would concede him a favourable peace. But the English declared that their irreconcilable attitude was only directed against the leaders of the armed forces of Germany, and that, once these forces were defeated, we should be well treated. And many a good simple German really believed that!

Even newspapers of the type of *The Daily Mail* sought by their praise not to discredit, but to strengthen the Chancellor, as may be seen from a few sentences from their leading article, "The Chancellor and the Pirate," on August 31st, 1915, after our diplomatic defeat in the *Arabic* case:

"It is difficult not to sympathize with the Chancellor in his fight with Tirpitz. For the past year he has been Chancellor only in name. His business has simply been to extricate Germany from the complications brought upon her by the real directors of German Policy, the War Office and the Admiralty. They pursue their courses with the usual disregard for civilian opinion. His function is to clear up after them. At last he is beginning to claim a voice in deciding the policy of which the diplomatic consequences are borne not by those who initiated it, but by himself."

Passages of this sort were quoted among us, and taken at their face value.[1]

The most obvious proofs that England and France, at first at any rate, were unwilling to make a peace of understanding were ignored. Our peace offer of December, 1916, which was accompanied, to the best of my knowledge, by the greatest spirit of accommodation, was answered contemptuously with the Entente's well-known programme of conquest. Even at this time we should have been confronted with conditions similar to those which the German Government accepted in November, 1918. In spite of this, the Chancellor and the democrats still failed to realize that their tactics were wrong. They went farther down the slippery slope, undermining the confidence of the German people and strengthening that of the enemy by an uninterrupted series of offers to capitulate.

The worst feature was that this policy was fed on illusions about a victory in the East. If England was to be regarded as invincible, and our defeat was to be accordingly accepted at once, that would after all have been better than years of a war of exhaustion

[1] How well, on the other hand, the British people really understood conditions with us may be shown by the following small but characteristic example, given to me by a German officer on his return from captivity in England. He had heard an English coal dealer, who had been called up for service, called by his fellow soldiers by the name of the Chancellor, and when he asked the reason for this, he received the reply: "He always calls him Bethmann-Hollweg, because he says things which one must not say."

with the same result. But a certain part of the Press in Germany, with which our political leaders unfortunately co-operated, was hostile to "Czarism" for reasons of internal politics. On England's alleged invincibility were founded the prospects of a German victory over "Czarism"! I would like to quote here a typical example. An official of the Wilhelmstrasse, on April 12th, 1916, calmly developed this view of a future for Germany, founded on her defeat by England:

"For us, as the central power of Europe, the first necessity is to be victorious on the continent, and to group our neighbours here centripetally around us.[1] We must not compromise this objective by unnecessarily embarking in a risky adventure.[2] From this firm European basis we can construct our position in the world, and our foreign trade. What has up to now been done in this direction is pure dilettantism. Any injury done to England is of course welcome, but it is simply impossible to defeat her. We must, therefore, retain sufficient strength and credit in the world to be able to continue our work of outstripping her after the war. In the future, dangerous undeveloped forces are to be found on Russian soil, not in the riddled purse of England. I think that peace at Russia's expense offers a possible solution of the problem. As this peace would be made at the expense of reactionary Russia, it would not exclude the possibility of future *ad hoc* understandings with another Russian Government. If we become strong in Europe, and the guardian power towards the East, an under-

[1] Poland!
[2] Submarine warfare.

standing with England would not be difficult, and it might even be the case that the interests of Albion would for once coincide with those of the strongest continental power."

At the beginning of July, 1916, Secretary Helfferich placed before the heads of the German States the following views which I quote from a contemporary memorandum:

"We must make our choice between England and Russia, in order to gain, for the ultimate peace as well as now, protection for our rear against one or other of these two main enemies. We must choose England, since the Russian programme is wholly inconsistent with our position as the guardian power of Western European civilization and with our relations to Austria-Hungary, the Balkans, and Turkey. On the other hand, a division of spheres of interest between England and Germany is quite possible. Accordingly, we must not treat the fleet as a necessity of Germany's existence, and must weaken Russia as far as possible. We must do full work at one task, instead of half working at many. England's interests would permit us to work with our whole strength against Russia. The determined fight against Russia restores to our procedure in the world-war its moral justification, which consists in coming to the aid of Austria, and not in the fight for the freedom of the seas. The public indignation in Germany against England should accordingly be diverted to Russia."

Thus wrote Helfferich, closing his statement with the following sentences:

"The above remarks will no doubt meet with the objection that I am reckoning without my host, seeing that in England itself hatred and the lust for destruction make any understanding impossible. Chamberlain sums up this tendency with the remark, which had aroused considerable opposition even before the war, 'We must crush Germany'; but both Chamberlain and our newspapers and pamphlets omit the subordinate clause of the sentence, which contains the logical explanation of the hostility, to wit, 'before it crushes us.'

"In the abyss of deep mutual mistrust, brought to a head by conscienceless demagogues and too powerful to be checked by the respective Governments, but having nevertheless no foundation in the true political conditions, that is to say in the necessities of existence of the two countries, lies the whole tragedy of the situation; and only the greatest wisdom of the statesmen, combined with unconquerable determination, which must be present in equal strength on both sides, can pull the coach out of the mire of demagogy. This hope is not so vain as might appear, for Asquith's ministry of demagogues is not assured of perpetual office. The English desire for our destruction may in part exclude the possibility of an understanding, but it in no way compels us to take up the fight at the points where the English are strongest, that is to say, on the seas and in Egypt."

Thus Helfferich too saw no more than vague hopes of an understanding with England, and nothing tangible whatever. But these vain wishes were enough to lead him and those who shared his views to refrain, during the precious years which could have been used

to save Germany, from the one step that might have forced England to relent—to wit, an understanding with the Czar, and the utmost development of our strength at sea. We did not deal the blows against English sea-power that we could have done, and thus, by sentimentality, too clever calculation, and an unmilitary conception of sea warfare, there resulted the achievement of England's desire to administer in this war the awful decisive blow against the mighty German competitor, from which he could never recover. In the autumn of 1916, when the English defence against submarines was becoming as it were settled, and our lack of courage had become notorious through the *Sussex* case, Lloyd George ventured already to talk of a "knock-out."

The hope above mentioned of a German victory to be based on an English victory seems to be a mere riddle, but it was unfortunately allowed to determine the fate of Germany in her most anxious hour. Rebounding from England's prestige, our statesmanship followed blindly the impetus given it by England in the direction of Russia. Countless Germans at home and at the front had a truer instinct, but they could not prevail.

This attitude of the Wilhelmstrasse was accompanied by the further pious and unconquerable conviction that the outstripping of England, which was not permitted to the German Empire while it was powerful by sea, would be readily conceded to a navyless Germany. The Chancellor and his friends,

who hoped for a swift and complete reconciliation with England after the "thunderstorm," believed that the means to achieve this was to sacrifice the German fleet. As late as October, 1918, German politicians still dreamt of buying the mercy of the Anglo-Saxons by abandoning submarine warfare. Their awakening after November, 1918, was a cruel one, and it is now too late to know better.

My standpoint was that we must either treat England as invincible and accept our defeat, the sooner the better, or else that we must use every political and military means to shake her position. In practice, I could of course only contemplate the second course. But we must clearly understand the way we were to follow. All the subtlety and waiting, not based on this plain choice, could only lead to destruction. All my efforts for the occupation of the Channel coast, for forcing a battle at sea, and for the early adoption of submarine activity, were based not on any departmental considerations, but simply and solely on this line of reasoning.

III

What means did we possess for the exercise of military pressure on England?

At the outbreak of war I was surprised to learn that the navy's plan of operations, which had been withheld from me, had not been arranged in advance with the army. The army based itself on the view, quite comprehensible from its standpoint, that the war

at sea, and indeed the whole campaign against England, was merely a secondary matter. Steps could have been taken before the war, under the control of the Chancellor, to draw up a single plan for a war on three fronts, or a world-war, but, as I have already stated, no such steps had been taken. Only a homogeneous Supreme Navy Command would have possessed the necessary authority to compel a proper employment during the war of the valuable information and expert knowledge gained by the navy as to the strength of the English; and such a command was never established.

Of the three possible means of fighting England, I will first discuss the occupation of the Channel coast. It was easily to be seen by the end of August that the operations of the army would lead us to the Flemish coast, and that the capture of Antwerp would only be a question of time. This rendered possible the use of Flanders as a base for naval warfare, and a substantial improvement of our naval strategical position. In my capacity as Secretary of State, it lay in my power to develop these possibilities, and I seized the opportunity with all my strength, forming the corps of marines and fortifying the Flemish coast.[1] Beyond this, however, an intelligent Government should have aimed at the capture of Calais. So long as the army hoped to capture Paris, I waited for the coast to fall into our hands of itself. I leave undiscussed the question whether it would not have been right to treat

[1] See Chap. XVIII.

the coast as the objective from the start. Stationed on Cape Grisnez, our artillery could have gravely hindered traffic in the Channel, and our naval forces could also have worked more effectively from there. The continual interference with the traffic based on the Thames would have caused grave interruption to English industry, and thus, at that time, when Germany's strength was wholly uninjured both at home and abroad, might have greatly increased English readiness for peace. Later, too, it would have been possible to shell London itself from Cape Grisnez, which with the long duration of the war would have been far more effective than the bombardment of Paris which was carried out in 1918. As I have already stated, I have always opposed measures that are of no military importance, including casual air raids on towns in the interior. On the other hand, a really effective concentrated bombardment of London by all available means from land and air would have been thoroughly justified as one way of shortening this inhuman war, and particularly so since England was notorious for observing international law only in so far as it suited her own interest.

The second means of exercising pressure on England was an engagement at sea. The Entente has defeated us by means of the British ships of the line, which made the starvation blockade possible, and whose prestige yoked to England's chariot all the peoples of the world. Of all the reproaches heaped upon me, one only has really affected me, that I did

not build more battleships. The reader will, however, have learnt from an earlier passage of this book that a sea battle would not have been without prospects of success for our fleet. In the next chapter I shall discuss the domestic considerations which crippled the navy at that time. Here I will only mention in advance the main point, the failure of our political leadership.

As already stated, the point of view of the Chancellor was that, if we were to come to an understanding with England, we were not to irritate her, and further that at the end of the war the fleet should as far as possible be still intact, in order to influence the peace negotiations. This latter view has always been as incomprehensible to me as the former. Other important persons shared the views of the Chancellor. Ballin, for example, wrote to the Chief of the Cabinet and to myself, that we should be content with the "fleet in being," this being the only right policy during the war. The Chief of the Cabinet fell in with this suggestion; he had never been much in touch with opinion at the front, and in his close association with the Crown he became more and more a compromise politician. Under his influence and that of the Chancellor stood Admiral von Pohl, who wrote to me on November 12th, 1915: "While I held the office of Chief of the Naval Staff, the Chancellor impressed upon me many times that it was absolutely necessary that the fleet should be preserved intact until the conclusion of peace."

In my opinion, it was simply nonsense to pack the fleet in cotton wool. The "fleet in being" had some meaning for England, for her fleet thus achieved its purpose of commanding the seas. But the principle was meaningless for Germany, whose object must be to keep the seas free for herself. Besides, we could not allow the war to develop into a war of exhaustion, but must attempt to shorten matters. How cleverly the English must have worked to cripple the determination of Germany's leaders is shown by the remark, which is reported to have been made by one of the Emperor's nearest advisers after the battle of the Skager-Rak, and which is at any rate absolutely consistent with the whole outlook of that circle: "What a pity! We had been near to getting peace from England." Among such influences the Emperor's own work was destroyed. In July, 1914, our politicians were playing a dangerous game, which, if it were to be played at all, could only be based on a strong Imperial sea-power. As soon, however, as the war had broken out, the fleet was as far as possible thrust into the background, and the impossible task undertaken of defeating England before the walls of Paris, and above all of bringing England, by fighting her in a forbearing spirit, to consent to a favourable peace, which she was simply not ready to grant. In peace the Chancellor had wished from the bottom of his heart that we had no fleet; in war he behaved as if it did not exist. The German Government had never approached the question how one should win a

war, simply leaving the matter to the General Staff of the army, which in its turn was not competent to deal with the political, economic, and naval questions raised by a world-war. Thus the Chancellor's only hope of bringing the war to an end rested on—the generosity of the English!

Many persons will no doubt ask: "In the most favourable circumstances, of what use would a successful sea battle have been to us? Were the English not in a position to restore their North Sea fleet rapidly from their reserves, and if necessary to draw on the battle strength of the French?"

The answer to these questioners is that the world-prestige of the English rests in the main on the very belief in the invincibility of their armada. A German sea victory, or even a doubtful success for England, would have worked the gravest injury to England's position. To estimate correctly the importance of such a loss of prestige for England, one must have seen the impression made abroad by our victory in the battle of Coronel. The English fully understood the effect of this victory, and for that reason they sent out from home an overwhelming force to wipe out their defeat. The fear of an even greater loss of prestige led them to act with ever-increasing caution in the face of our North Sea fleet. The question whether a victory at sea in 1914 would have had the effect of breaking the blockade was not at that time in itself decisive, for the English, having regard to their oversea position and the existence of Japan,

could not risk any substantial weakening of their sea-power. If we had won naval prestige at that time, the whole course of the war would have been different. Italy's secession to the enemy camp would have been prevented, and our relations with the Scandinavian countries would have been altered at one stroke.[1]

In particular the Czar's readiness for a separate peace, and our prospect of an understanding with Japan, would have increased as our prestige grew and that of the English fell. It could not be contested that we were strong enough at any rate to reduce the English fleet considerably. The sea-power of the British lay like a nightmare on the whole of the non-Anglo-Saxon world. We, and not the British, were the natural protectors of the smaller maritime powers. All eyes were turned to us. It was the critical hour of the world's freedom. Yet greater things were at stake on sea than on land, and at sea many of our momentary enemies secretly sympathized with us. Only strong measures could help us. We were certain,

[1] The occupation and fortification of the Aaland Islands, which was recommended to me by Swedish friends, seemed to me to deserve special consideration. With the occupation of the islands as a base we would have controlled the Gulf of Bothnia, the main line of communication between Russia and England, and strengthened the good-will of the Swedes. As our prestige sank, both the sympathies and the business interests of the Swedes were more and more transferred to the English. The absence of any general mobilization before the war, and the departmental limitations of the naval staff in their relations to me, were the cause of my being unable, until the war had actually broken out, to consider the question of isolating Russia by the occupation of the Aaland Islands.

at the least, to do substantial injury to the "Grand Fleet." Any penetration of British naval power would awaken the Indian, Egyptian, and other questions, deprive England of the further allies that she needed to encompass our defeat, and incline her to peace. England understood the danger, and appreciated our strength, better than we did at home. That was why she hesitated to enter the war, and that is why, when she had entered, she avoided battle. In the first year our prospects were good, and even later they were still tolerable. In the later stages of the war the English Press were merely echoing the views of the Admiralty when they spoke warningly against an engagement at sea. England could, they argued, gain nothing by a "precipitate and costly action." "So long as the German fleet remains in hiding, we reap all the advantages of sea-power," wrote *The Daily Telegraph.* If this sea-power had only been challenged by us and kept in doubt, we should at any rate have had a better standing among the neutrals. In the face of the British Fleet tactics, we could only gain by a spirit of offensive, and not by passive waiting. It is only with almost unbearable sorrow that I can now think of the world-wide difference that would have been produced had a sea battle been fought to a decision in the early months of the war. Indeed, even an incomplete battle like the encounter at the Skager-Rak would at that time have had a great effect, whereas that engagement, victorious although not fought out, was unable, after nearly two years of the

war, to achieve any lasting political result, in spite of our advantages in the actual contest. For in the time that had elapsed the general position had changed and settled too much in England's favour, and the countries that were still neutral had lost their belief in our ultimate victory since our surrender to Wilson's brutal and energetic note.

Even an unfavourable sea battle would not have made our prospects materially worse. It could be safely assumed that the losses of the enemy would be as great as ours. Nothing, indeed, that could happen to our fleet could be worse than its retention in idleness.

The alleged inferiority of the German ships, which constitutes one of the most tragic and disastrous libels in the whole history of Germany, was invented and spread abroad as an excuse at this time to justify the inactivity of the fleet. The "naval policy" of the pre-war years was, according to the Chancellor's wishes, to be put forward as the true cause of the war, although in 1896 and 1905 England had been far more exacting in her demands on Germany, who had then in the one case no fleet, and in the other only a weak one, than she was in July, 1914, after we had built ourselves a fleet and had refused in 1911 and 1912 to abandon it. But if the navy policy and myself were to be found guilty, it was impossible, with the best will in the world, to separate the person of the Emperor from this policy. But for him such a policy could never have existed. And now Bethmann intended to buy friendship and peace from England

at the price of the definite abandonment of the policy, that is, in truth, of our one source of strength against England. The Emperor, as the leader of the navy in war, should have resisted this policy of self-deception, that contradicted the whole nature of the world-war. But when the report was spread that the fleet could not go out to battle because of its inefficiency and bad material, then I and I alone was answerable, and the Emperor was relieved of all responsibility to the people for the inactivity of the navy. From the divergence of political views between the Chancellor's party and myself there sprang an enormous flood of allegations against the fleet material which were not disposed of until the test at the Skager-Rak, and prior to that event it had been used to persuade the Emperor to hold the fleet in check, and had had great effect in crippling the activities of the navy. If the Emperor had taken other advice, if he had followed his own real instincts, Germany would not now be lying in ruins.

We were defeated by the old traditional English naval prestige, which had never been put to the test in modern times. This prestige made our governors fear to send our fleet to battle when the time came to do so. And thus, with the failure to use the best, indeed at first the only, weapon against England, began the tragedy of our lost opportunities.[1]

After the prospects of a separate peace with Russia, and with it the solution of our problems, had for the

[1] For details see Chapter XVIII.

time being become much more remote as a result of this naval policy, of Italy's entry into the war, and of the failure to carry out the Hindenburg plan of campaign for 1915, we were blessed at the beginning of 1916 with another gift from Heaven for the salvation of Germany in the shape of the submarine campaign, which was then ripe for execution. A subsequent chapter will give the story of the stupidities which led to the employment of this last decisive weapon being undertaken too late by one crucial year, to the consequent ruin of our future. Time worked against us, and at the beginning of 1916 we were no longer strong enough to survive any further slovenly wasting of our strength and our prestige.

I left the service at this period because the persons in authority would not recognize our prospects at sea, and would not act in a manner befitting the real seriousness of our position. The economic war had become the main fight, while the military front, in spite of the tremendous forces which were necessarily employed in the defensive fighting, was now the secondary theatre. Even the great leaders who in 1916 were appointed to command our glorious army, and who brought it renewed strength, were faced by but limited possibilities of development. The moment had arrived, as in the Seven Years' War, when the question of a separate peace with the Czar was definitely become a question of life and death for us.

IV

In the autumn of 1916 I had conversations with certain pro-German Russians, which in conjunction with other indications gave me ground for the belief that a separate peace was then a possibility. I of course could not then, and cannot now, know the exact terms on which such a peace could have been concluded; but I assume that the following basis of negotiations could be regarded as giving promise of success: we would have to settle the Serbian question in an accommodating spirit, agreeing to the ten points of the ultimatum which the Czar had accepted in 1914, and consenting to arbitration on the two remaining points, thus in the main bringing about a Russian success without an Austrian defeat. We could demand the Narew line on strategical grounds, to protect East Prussia from invasions like that of 1914, offering Russia in exchange an equivalent portion of Eastern Galicia, Austria in her turn being indemnified, if necessary, in the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar and in Albania. We would have to secure for the Russians the passage of vessels of war through the Dardanelles, and also, if they made an alliance with us, an island in the Aegean Sea. We would either abandon the Bagdad railway, or share it with them. We would leave Persia to them and take over their debts to France. We could have given them even better terms if they succeeded in obtaining peace with Japan also for us. With reference to Constantinople, the Rus-

sians would have to realize that we could not leave Turkey in the lurch. We would have had to promise, however, gradually to drop our Turkish policy. Provision could easily have been made for the personal employment of the Grand Dukes, and other matters.

Austria could have been persuaded to join in such a peace, and Italy could then have been forced to an understanding.

To the Japanese one could have suggested the restoration to China of Tsingtao, to be held on lease by us, without fortifications, on the terms that Japanese and Germans should have equal rights there. We would pay them in return a certain war indemnity, and would also propose an alliance bidding us come to their aid if they were attacked by a European power, as well as by a non-European power, they in their turn having to help us if we were attacked by a non-European power as well as by a European. All this is little more than an indication of the sort of basis on which we should have had to attempt an understanding with Russia and Japan. The important point beyond any doubt was that at all stages our whole policy should have been directed against England. The Russo-Japanese *rapprochement* of 1916 offered the foundation for this last great anti-Anglo-Saxon alliance.

The matter should have been set in train by a personal interview with the Czar. If I may put myself in the place of some person having the confidence of

the Czar, I conceive that he might have spoken as follows: "Your Majesty has expressly assured me that you did not desire war with Germany. To me it appears as the greatest misfortune that Germans and Russians should weaken each other, and if a stop is not put to the process the future development of both peoples, and the thrones of the Hohenzollerns and the Romanoffs, are in peril. I understand that your Majesty is convinced that I have always attributed the greatest importance to Russia's friendship. Give me, therefore, a man with whom I may negotiate without the feeling that he is boxing my ears." The effect after all depends less on what one says than on success in catching the ear of the other party by intuition or old acquaintance. The Czar, for example, would listen gladly to an officer. I know from my own experience it was possible to address him in this manner. In addition he had already, in the person of Stürmer, appointed a most suitable negotiator.

Such a conversation could have been arranged by an autograph letter from the Emperor to the Czar, so worded as to restore the latter's self-confidence, and pointing out, in language that would be sure to have weight with him, that there were no substantial conflicts of interest between the two old friends that could not be adjusted, but that the present unfortunate position threatened to become irremediable; that the letter was written from anxiety for their two dynasties, in confidence in the Czar's discretion, and in the

certainty that he would never allow it to become an official document.

Once the Grand Duke Nicholas was removed, the party of the Grand Dukes could not create any irremovable obstacles. The Czar was an honourable man. Such an opportunity to escape from the *cul de sac* would have seemed to him most tempting, and the undertaking, in the then feeling at the Russian court, could only have ended in success.

The attempt to establish communication was condemned to failure by the much too ostentatious dispatch of Prince Max of Baden, who was little fitted for the task. The premature attempt through the Danish court failed equally, its only result being to enlighten the Danes as to our need for peace. Above all, however, no success was possible while Bethmann continued to rain blows upon the Russians, compelling them to believe that we were determined to betray them to the English and the Poles. I doubt whether even the German supporters of the Chancellor can have remained unaware of the fact that his personality obstructed the materialization of the peace tendencies in Petrograd. The Czar would have presumably written in answer to a letter from the Emperor: "I am ready for peace, but only with a government which gives me some guarantee of anti-English and pro-Russian sympathies, and which enjoys the confidence of Japan." The attitude of our political leaders, as shown in the above-quoted memorandum of Helfferich,

was certainly well calculated to lose this excellent opportunity to save our country.

Never in the whole of our history had we had as much to offer Russia as we had in 1916.

Among remote possibilities, too, there were many favourable prospects, as, for example, that of a revision of the Treaty of Prague in the event of Denmark following Russia and entering into more intimate relations with us both, which was fully consistent with her natural interests and with her geographical relation to both Russia and Germany. Through the mediation of the Czar, we could also have brought the French, in their then position, to make peace, by conceding them, say, the small portion of Alsace which they had conquered. The peace of the whole continent could, and ought to have been secured from Petrograd.

By the time that the suicidal policy of Bethmann and the German democrats had established the Polish kingdom, making the Russians still more hostile to us and leading them to their revolution, and by the time that the submarine campaign, begun too late and under still less favourable circumstances, had in combination with the clumsiness of our diplomacy brought America into the war, Germany was externally so fast in the mire that the decision of the war was for the future to be sought mainly in her internal affairs, in the economic war, and in the comparative strength of the nerves and patriotism of the Germans and the English.

V

The Anglo-Saxons had fully understood that in this tremendous struggle the power of ideas bore within it the seeds of victory. They cried aloud in all languages: "Hear, ye nations of the world, there is among us a people which is ever disturbing our concord, which declares war and desires to conquer the world, while we are ever bringing you but freedom. It began with Alsace, it seeks now the same end in Belgium, and if it succeeds there a like fate awaits you. This people is held in bondage by a bloody caste of soldiers and Junkers, and their autocrat, the Kaiser, sets the world aflame of his own will. Aid us to defeat this people, that we may punish it as it deserves. Only when that is done can that league of peoples be formed which is the desire of all noble men, only then will there be peace upon the earth. Mankind will then be as a herd of sheep, and so far as a shepherd be needed, we will readily perform the task." Thus, more or less, flowed the story from the lips of the Anglo-Saxon leaders in a thousand tones, with never-flagging repetition. With such tales did they drug themselves and their peoples. In order to maintain a sufficient degree of hatred among their peoples to ensure war to the knife, they cried to the world: "See these Germans, who destroy the art of France, who violate her women, and in devilish lust of cruelty hack off the heads of her children." For this work our enemies' funds were distributed in all

countries, even in Germany itself where opportunity offered. Worse still, use was made of the German's ignorance of the outside world, and of that strain of self-destruction which runs like a thread of blood through the thousand years of our history. Clever advantage was taken also of international capitalism, which here and there had found its way into Germany, and of that ferment of decomposition which is so admirably represented by such organs as the *Frankfürter Zeitung.*

What response did our political leaders make to these intellectual and commercial attacks of our enemies?

They might have said: "For centuries you Anglo-Saxons have set the peoples of the European continent one against another. Out of scattered fragments of tribes and strips of territory Prussia rebuilt a united Germany, and the stronger she has grown, the more clearly has she realized that it is her mission to fight for the freedom of Europe against the giant powers beyond the seas. For Europe, the sea-girt continent of many states, will aways reach the highest level of intellectual achievement while her many closely neighboured civilizations are free to develop and to advantage each other by mutual intercourse. Germany stands and falls with Europe, and Europe with Germany. It is thus Germany's deepest interest to maintain the peoples of the continent in their full liberty and their full power. You Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, enslave the peoples body and soul. See, ye peoples of the earth, how many of you are already

more or less but their comatose vassals, and how much greater the danger will be in the days to come. Thus, we are fighting for the freedom of the world against the all-throttling tyranny of the Anglo-Saxons.

"You Anglo-Saxons call us militarists and autocrats, whilst among yourselves you have established for the maintenance of your own fighting spirit the most absolute dictatorship that history has known, and you exercise a military power of Draconic severity without regard for personal freedom or the principles of democracy. You rail at us for militarism, but Germany is in truth the only independent power left in the world, walking her own path and capable of maintaining the balance in Europe. Your masters in the City of London and in Wall Street, New York, know quite well that Germany alone stands between them and the propagation over all the world of their capitalistic 'Understanding theory.' If they succeed in removing this last obstacle and in establishing an unlimited world monopoly, then indeed will a Pax Britannica bring the world the quiet of the graveyard for many years to come."

A similar line of thought to that sketched out above should have been encouraged before the war, and spread by all possible means, for our people lacked great ambitions, and their feelings of patriotism had not been sufficiently developed, while they misunderstood the strength of the Anglo-Saxons, and had allowed the sense of our imperative need for external strength to be largely overlaid by cosmopolitan Uto-

pianism. But in the war itself, when life and death depended on it, the determination to survive required to be awakened and kept alive.

And what did our political leaders do? They did, it is true, rebut this and that slander. But in the main their attitude could be expressed thus: "It is true that we declared war, but we do not, however, want to defeat you, but merely to defend ourselves. It is true that we have done Belgium a wrong, but we are ready, as far as possible, to make it good afterwards; we have no intention of wholly conquering that country, but we would like to retain part of it. In this war, we have simply no aim, no objective, no idea. We are, it is true, fighting for the balance of power at sea, but for the present only with words, as we have at the same time to secure that the reactionary and corrupt Russian bureaucracy should not again lord it over the noble Poles. That our unfortunate navy should incommode the Anglo-Saxons, we can well understand, and we concede their right to resent it, although our fleet has really only half the strength of the English alone. Please do not be angry about it; I, your friend, could not prevent this fleet being built, although strictly speaking I had as Chancellor the power to do so, and am the responsible party. You are right in the main, too, when you say that our institutions are less democratic than yours. It is true that our national character, the experience of our history and our geographical position render an executive of very wide powers a necessity of our

Government, and that our Emperor has not even the same power under the constitution as President Wilson; but we will alter all that. If I had had my way, we should already, long ago, have handed over Alsace with the Vosges barrier to the French propagandists, so that it might be wholly free. On principle I support actively the party quarrels in the Reichstag, in order to help forward democratic feeling in Germany. It would no doubt be better to leave such internal changes to be dealt with after the war is over, as their discussion at present diverts the attention of our people too much from the terrible seriousness of this hour of their fate; but I feel, in agreement with my democratic friends, that by democraticizing ourselves we may win your approval and the good-will of the whole world. I am accordingly taking steps in this direction at once, and as I admit your nobility of character even while you are hostile to me I feel sure that we shall soon reach a peace that will be just to all parties."

To establish these views in Germany, the natural instincts of our people, which were so emphatically displayed at the outbreak of war, were systematically diverted and broken by Press censorship and by a regular drainage system of repression of opinions worked from the Wilhelmstrasse, which resulted finally in the destruction of the popular morale and power of resistance, and indeed of all our self-confidence. In the great dangers of our position, which were obvious to every statesman, an active development of patriotic

ideas and a full maintenance of morale was essential from the first day of the war if we were to hold our own and reach a conclusion rendering it possible in some degree to make good our heavy losses and to continue the mission of Prusso-Germany in the world.

Bleeding from a thousand wounds, underfed, with its back against the wall of its home, the best of Germany stood fighting for its life, when suddenly the wall was overthrown from behind, and the people lost their control and fell into delirium.

The curse of history, and, if Germany survives, the curse of posterity, will rest on the men who brought about this disaster.

VI

Our political leaders gained us neither allies nor sympathies; they neither gave the people inspiring ideals for the fight, nor opened their eyes to the terrors of defeat. The talk of a pure war of defence was an illusion, and bound to lead us to destruction; for England had already during the war destroyed our position in the world, and there was nothing more to defend; merely at the best something to rebuild if we could. The German people could not hope to survive unless the terms of peace ensured this reconstruction, but the thoughtless talk of a pure war of defence concealed this necessity from the masses. How different was Lloyd George, with his talk of the knock-out! Those Germans, however, who could see that there was no other outcome but that either the English

must achieve our destruction or we must ourselves achieve our future, and who spoke this truth boldly, were sacrificed by the government to the hatred of the unintelligent masses. Bethmann's conduct was the exact opposite to the statesmanship with which Lloyd George and Clemenceau led their peoples to victory. The Chancellor and his friends the demagogues ever directed the sharp arrows of their political warfare against their homeland instead of against the enemy. Thus they destroyed the resistance of the people, and paved the way for the collapse, until at last the people and the demagogues who had come to rule over them threw down their arms and laid themselves at the feet of their enemies, with the cry: "We who have always believed in the conscience of the world, forswear the accursed disciples of the policy of force, the greedy foes who wanted to swallow you. We never wanted victory, we feared it even, for would it not have left the yoke of the autocrats and militarists firmly upon the neck of the enslaved German people? Now defeat has freed the German people from the despotism of the Emperor and the soldiers, has brought it happiness, and made it worthy of a great future. Now we will compel you, not by hateful force, but by good and noble words, to love the German people and further their interests. We will gain the confidence of the world, and make free the way that leads from Imperialism to Idealism; we will sow in German hearts, not hatred against the imperialism of the British who have starved us, nor against

the French and the Poles who seek to dismember us, but hatred against the men who once made the German Empire powerful, who formed armies and built ships to protect it, and constructed a mighty dam to protect its prosperity against covetous neighbours."

This end of Germany's power has been brought about by the deception of the mass of the German people throughout the war. Now that the awful test of facts has been applied, it is terribly painful even to think of the false hopes which Scheidemann and Company, with the complaisance of the Government, held out to the people. Their theory ran thus:

"1. If Germany will democratize herself at once, we can obtain a peace of understanding; the only obstacles are the monarchy and the military."

When the Northcliffe propaganda for the undermining of the German army had made full and successful use of the explosives thus supplied to it by the German democrats, Prince Max of Baden, Erzberger, and Scheidemann could not rest until they had tested their theory of the "peace of justice, not of force," at the cost of our monarchy, our army, our honour, and our freedom.

"2. If we only state frankly that we will give up Belgium, we can have a peace of understanding."

The doves of peace had been flying without ceasing across our frontiers since 1917, bearing in their beaks the renunciation of Belgium, but each flight merely confirmed the resolve of our enemies to wait until

the patent internal decay of Germany had achieved their true war aim, the ruin of our country.

" 3. The Junkers, captains of industry, and annexationists made the war, and prolong the war, for their own profit. Overthrow them, and the free peoples will stretch out their hands to you, and perpetual peace will come."

Even ancient Rome knew how to build a policy on the internal dissensions of the Germans. The Entente had further help from the jealousies of the agitator-ridden classes, who were always ready to destroy the true upholders of their own economic existence, since these " earned more " than they did themselves.

Thus, many Germans welcomed the " Dawn of the Revolution." Our proud, strong, respected Empire has been broken, not by our enemies, but from inside. Our unconquered army collapsed because our people was not ripe to fulfil its political tasks in the framework erected by Bismarck. In London or Paris the man in the street feels of himself what is good for the country. Among us he fills himself with illusions gathered from certain newspapers and parties, well fitted to lead him on like a will-o'-the-wisp from disaster to disaster. Only recently, in March, 1919, the socialist Paul Lensch, in the *Glocke,* showed how quiet those elements among us now are, who, like the *Berliner Tageblatt,* and papers of that stamp, have been assuring us for years that we need but drive the " Pan-Germans " to the devil, and make a frank declaration as to Belgium, to achieve a favourable

peace. Whether these newspapers to which Lensch refers are ever quiet, I cannot say. I am, however, quite certain, as must everyone be who has followed the effusions of the *Frankfürter Zeitung* with any attention and who believes himself to stand for Germany, that this journal, in war and peace, has in effect played right into the hands of our deadliest enemies. With a lack of national feeling that would be inconceivable in any English or French newspaper, it has always attacked the State, and since the days of Bismarck has continually advocated the decisions best calculated to weaken the power and dignity of Germany; at every critical moment it has dealt its country a stab in the back; and at the last, absolutely consistent, it has warmly welcomed the revolution, the ruin of our honour and our future. In its task of deceiving the German people, it has made a clever use of that ignorance of the outside world which is characteristic of many of our fellow-citizens, who know nothing of the spirit and national pride of other peoples, and draw conclusions as to foreigners from their own character. Loyal and simple, but at the same time confused and forgetful of their duty, they miss every opportunity for political achievement or increase of strength. They fail to see that every weakness involves an enemy advance and increased attacks; they fail to see that in our position in the world freedom and a tolerable economic situation can only be maintained for Germany by exceptional unity, honesty, and self-sacrifice on all sides.

Another socialist, the federal minister Dr. David, said at the beginning of 1919: "The main cause of our defeat was the weakness of our sense of duty to the State." That is absolutely right. Many years ago an Italian friend, Admiral Bettolo, said to me: "The only dangerous socialists are the German, for they make a dogma, a religion, out of their party principles, and are comrades first, and Germans only second. Exactly the reverse is the case with the English and the French and even with our socialists in Italy." The hope, which I had for a time in the autumn of 1914, that the elements with a proper sense of patriotism would gain the upper hand in our Social Democracy, soon disappeared. The international Marxist propaganda, after decades of work, the narrow-minded class hatred, the German leaning to utopianism, had sunk too deep for that. A number of able men among the Social Democrats displayed during the war sound patriotic instincts. If the Government had encouraged them, instead of following at the heels of stupid or malevolent demagogues of the international wing, the German workmen might have grown with confidence in the school of war to a ripe German patriotism, and they would thus have been now in as good a position in the world as the workers of England. But our politicians of the left showed the basest ingratitude to the Prusso-German State, the best of all governments. The wise and statesmanlike traditions of Frederick the Great and Bismarck counted as obsolete against the views of agitators, the

mention of whose very names must be repugnant to true Germans, although these undesirable individuals, not content with having ruined our country, are now actually ruling it for reward.

Thus many circles of the people fought passionately against those truthful ones who from the first said: "Whatever we do, whatever we offer to the enemy, this war must end either in our complete salvation or in our complete destruction."

When Germans contested this position they were injuring our strength from behind. After the first years of the war our enemies knew that the country was wearing itself out with this friction, and the knowledge gave them more confidence than their own strength. Scheidemann thought that, by loud and energetic renunciation of the idea of victory, he could encourage the "comrades" in enemy countries to take a like step. He never realized that he had exactly the opposite effect, and that he enabled the enemy Chauvinists to gain the upper hand over the peacemakers. And what real, terrible annexationists there were among our enemies, in comparison with the men who were so labelled in Germany!

A declaration by the Government and the majority parties of positive war aims would not have prevented, but would in fact have assisted, negotiations with England for a peace of understanding. The Germans alone did not know that war aims, the desirability of which is understood by the population, have the

practical effect of reducing the demands of the opponents.

In fact, in the fight for the life of a people there is but one spirit which makes its armed forces invincible; this lies in the words:

"Man must soar, or cower low;
Either conquer and be free,
Or lose all in slavery;
Triumph or disaster know:
The hammer or the anvil be."

Owing to the conduct of the Government and the party leaders, the masses remained wholly ignorant that the reviled annexationists were really advocating nothing more than this plain truth. They thought them monstrous, and condemned them without understanding.

Cohn, the member of the Reichstag, taught the masses to sing:

"The rich draws profits from strife,
The poor pays with his life!"

The name of "never-endian" became a term of abuse. Gambetta had been canonized by his people because by his work in prolonging the war he gained them better terms of peace, and above all saved their honour and their self-confidence, the foundations of all national prosperity. The German people did not understand that England would not have a peace of understanding (how warmly any possibility of it would have been welcomed by us!), but was simply

waiting for the stupidity of our misguided masses to overthrow our so-called "never-endians," that is, to prevent the employment of our strength, the application of our energies. The aim of the enemy was, as must now be plain even to the most stupid among us, our destruction. There was, after all, nothing to move England to a peace of understanding, since that much, such were our policy and the conduct of the war, brought about thereby, she could always have when it suited her. It was thus clear that she wanted something more. Every right-minded German would rather fight the longest war, with the smallest prospect of victory, than accept final judgment of destruction without a most crushing necessity. This latter course was simply a betrayal of the nation.

I do not of course overlook for a moment the trials to which the nerves of the masses were exposed by the starvation blockade. The mental and physical effects of this, the most cruel of all weapons of war, which it was left to the English to introduce into modern warfare, must not be underestimated; they offer indeed a strong excuse for the gradual weakening of the power of resistance among the people. But it was correspondingly the more urgent duty of our national leaders, and indeed of every far-seeing politician, to survey the problem calmly and to do everything possible to maintain and direct into the proper channels the fighting spirit of the people. Where the real wish for victory is absent, strength and spirit are crippled as well.

My so-called "annexationism" consisted simply in a pessimistic view, which has unfortunately been proved correct by subsequent history of our politico-economic prospects. I was unable to console myself with ideas about a peace of justice and a league of nations, as did all our varieties of international capitalists and socialists. I asked myself what sort of a peace would be required to secure to Germany, in her difficult geographical position, equal weight with the other natural world-powers. Our world-power could only cease to be artificial if we succeeded in reaching a position of *primus inter pares* in Central Europe, a position in which the majority of the continental nations was the guarantee of their own full freedom. That was the true objective, and until it was gained the power of Germany would be as little consistent with the standing of the German people in the world as in the eighteenth century the standing of Prussia was with its material strength.

"Territory is future" was a true motto for the empires of the British, the Americans, the Russians, and even of the French, who were capable of expansion in North Africa. Territory in this sense could not be won by the German Empire, wedged in in the heart of Europe. In the world and for the world, her future rested on her work, and in the existing political position could only be secured by concentrated defensive strength at home, compelling the respect of all neighbours. That is the real reason why our enemies wanted to crush Prussian militarism, for then

our greatness would be gone. For the Czar or the French an army of millions might perhaps be an immoral luxury, for who ever thought of attacking those countries? On the other hand, we did need great military defensive strength to counter-balance our extraordinarily unfavourable conditions of territory and frontiers, and our neighbours' centuries-old lust of conquest; this was expressly confirmed by Lloyd George at the beginning of 1914—and who could deny it now, after the final experiences of the world-war? But from the point of view of international politics Germany could not after 1914 be capable of defence, or even of survival, unless the English supremacy over Belgium was disposed of.

I never expected, not even before the battle of the Marne, a complete German military victory in the sense of 1870. In any case the Americans would have robbed us of many of the fruits of victory. Even a century ago, in 1815, the President of the United States, in spite of the then hostility of the United States to England, is reported to have stated in a Presidential message: "It will be the aim of a resolute statesmanship to prevent the ripening of the seed that lies in Germany." [1]

My own view was that a complete military victory of either side was unlikely, and that the decision would rest with the moral elements of determination and power of resistance. I did not doubt that, if we suc-

[1] I only know this quotation from *England's Predominance, the Days of the Continental System,* by A. von Peez and Paul Dehn (1912), p. 346.

ceeded in opening the eyes of the German people to the full meaning of British supremacy in Belgium, we should develop strength enough to secure a peace that guaranteed us against that danger. In the event of defeat, the fate of Germany would be subjection to a foreign power. It was better to go to the farthest lengths to tempt victory, than to accept such a helot status.

Since 1870 our greatly increased population, on which the growth of our prosperity and power depended, could no longer, with our limited territory, be all accommodated on the soil. Land hunger thus led, as it had done in the early days of German history, to the emigration and loss to Germany of the surplus population. An artificial increase in the numbers the country could support was only to be gained by trade and industry. Even if our population had remained stationary, we could not have remained the predominantly agricultural country of a generation before, since after 1870 the great plains of America and Russia began to compete with our agricultural exports, and had indeed put a stop to them. To our export of raw materials, if our population was to increase or even to keep its level, had to be added the export of the manufactured goods, and for their production we had again to import large quantities of raw material, as indeed we had also for our agriculture, if it was to increase its output so as to support an increased population. Under these circumstances a stoppage of imports and exports would amount to a terrible disease of the

whole body politic, a crash from wealth to misery unprecedented in the world's history. Throughout the war there lay upon my mind like a nightmare the picture of millions of starving and workless proletarians, rooted from their homes and driven to destroy each other that the survivors might have bare room to live.

Throughout history the possession of the coasts of the Netherlands has always meant English domination on the Continent. England has long regarded the Belgian question as her own affair. If she held Antwerp, she held the Hague too, and Cologne, and from her points of vantage on the Scheldt and the lower Rhine she could master Europe. Germany could not make her war losses good to any extent if the Meuse territories, which had been part of the empire for nearly a thousand years, were again brought under her protection. For an export trade such as, up to 1914, lay at the root of our national existence necessitated a high political standing in the world. Only German dreamers, who did not know on what they themselves lived, could imagine that the Anglo-Saxons would permit a Germany for which they did not have a certain fear ever again to work so freely and unhindered for its own profit all over the world. Before 1914, however, our world-position was not based so much on our actual strength as on the respect won in 1870. If we did not maintain this respect—that is, if we did not emerge from the war as well as England —then we lost everything we had built up in the world.

Our homeland flourished on our prestige abroad, and this would vanish like the old Hanse League if we did not win an independent position over against England.

If only in order to make good the enormous direct war losses that we suffered overseas, it was vitally necessary for us to emerge from the war on a broader economic basis in an age when, as the British said, the great grow unceasingly and the small become smaller. The maintenance of our pre-war economic influence in Antwerp, the liberation of our kinsmen, the Flemings, from the foreign rule of Franco-Walloons, the removal of the English from the continental coast, were my only material war aims, and they cannot be called annexationist.

I pass over here the point of view of naval strategy, which laid down that our position in the Heligoland triangle became untenable if England drew Belgium and Holland into her group, and thus extended her political power to the Ems.

What harm could have been done if the whole German people had taken the liberation of the Flemings as a serious war aim! And would this have been in any respect more immoral than the reannexation of German Alsace by the French? One would have left the Flemings their independence, whereas the French refused even to grant the Alsatians self-government. The only difference is that the French, according to their own point of view, hold the government of others to be their natural right, and the Ger-

mans concede this to the French, but suffer from attacks of conscience when an opportunity arises of themselves gaining in influence.

Our aim should have been to maintain the economic prosperity of our people, to preserve our beloved lands on the Rhine from encroachment, to save our Hanse towns from degenerating into English agencies, to secure our whole country from the death by strangulation plotted for it by the English, and finally to reconstruct after its collapse the whole artificial structure of our standing in the world. A peace, however, which left the English standing on the Meuse and the Scheldt meant for ourselves and for the whole of foolish disunited Europe the end of freedom and prosperity, and was only to be accepted if and when the very last chance of a better end was really and finally lost.

After the war, however, there was no neutral Belgium, any more than there has been at any time since 1905. Belgium and Holland lived on our prosperity, as the outlet of our industrial activity. It was to our interest to maintain them in freedom and prosperity, while the English simply desired them as bridge-heads.

The Government should have copied Lloyd George and Clemenceau in giving the people an outward and visible war aim, if only to divert them from vain and fruitless civil strife over reforms which could not benefit any party in the event of defeat. They should have taught the people to look at the essentials, and to leave secondary matters alone.

I felt certain from the very beginning of the war that defeat would be surely followed by a revolution, although I certainly never dreamt that there could be Germans who would yield, before the war was over, to the temptation to revolt and deliver the whole country into the hands of a foreign enemy. Our policy, leading as it did to disaster both at home and abroad, led others too to take gloomy views; as early as 1915 the Crown Prince asked me whether I thought he would ever govern the country. But if the old State were to collapse, the strength of the German people would fall with it, for they had hitherto always shown their incapacity to prosper without firm leadership. They needed the Prusso-German State. Their guardian angel was the tradition of Frederick the Great and of Bismarck. Our people lack natural political genius, such as, for example, the French possess.

We had a powerful monarchy because history had taught the Germans that in their perilous position they could not stand without it. And now we were demolishing our constitution at the time of our greatest danger, while our enemies were following exactly the opposite course, and increasing the power of their executives to the greatest possible extent. By this, we did not merely lose the advantage of homogeneous leadership, which we had had at the beginning of the war. We rather added to our material inferiority a moral and spiritual weakness, by opposing in the last year of the war to the dictatorships of Wilson, Lloyd

George, and Clemenceau, a weary, worn-out old man like Hertling, and finally by permitting purely destructive party-leaders to divide up the power among themselves.

The internal health of a people depends on the possibility of its freely developing its strength abroad. By employing their strength against each other at home, the Germans introduced a new stage of decay in which the unhappy nation, deluded by the sorry spectacle of demagogues squabbling over "power," was to be robbed of its prosperity, its dignity, and its great ideals.

In any event, and from whatever point of view the subject was approached, the only escape from immeasurable misery was to be found in making the people fully conscious of the sorrows that threatened them, and really imbuing them with heroism and loyalty to the State of their fathers. It would then have been as possible for us to hold out as it was for the French, and the German people would not have had to undergo the physical and moral trials and humiliations which their weakness and their internal collapse have brought upon them.

VII

The lack of comprehension of the views developed above, and the endless tactical mistakes of our Government and our democrats in the attempts to obtain peace, found disastrous expression in the peace resolutions of July, 1917. It at once became clear to me

that, after such an obvious nervous collapse, the prospects either of the early conclusion of a peace of renunciation or of a further successful prosecution of the war were very seriously diminished. If there had ever been in England any real desire for a termination of the war on the footing of an understanding, it was clear that after this proof of our moral and political instability the well-known remark of Lloyd George—that England need never make any sacrifice for a peace of renunciation, because that could still be had under any circumtances—gained a fuller meaning than ever. The course we had chosen was, in addition, wholly unlikely to help towards a separate peace with Russia.

If in these circumstances there was to be any hope of salvation—great hope there could no longer be—the attempt should have been made to develop a strong national counter-movement among the people, in order to create the impression abroad that the German power of resistance was still strong, to give the Government a footing for the exercise of a shrewd and strong policy, and finally to prevent any further advance down the slippery slope of public peace offers. It was these considerations that led District Governor Kapp and a number of East Prussians of all parties to form the German Fatherland party. The first of the three desired effects, the impression abroad, was undoubtedly achieved by the tremendous national strength of the movement. The German Government was, however, far from understanding what a weapon

the creation of this party had placed in their hand. They never dared to make use of it, doing on the contrary all in their power to hamper the movement. Such an attitude, indeed, was prescribed by the immediate counter-operations of the authors of the peace resolutions, who, in order to maintain their position, succeeded by a well-organized campaign of lies in fathering internal political aims on to the new party, and in bringing it into suspicion as reactionary. Further, in complete and thoroughly German misunderstanding of the object of a "war aim," they charged the party and myself with "annexationism." Apart from the fact that the leaders of the party had held aloof from any particular policy of annexation, merely making certain definite demands in respect of Belgium, the crucial point as against England, there was no necessity to do more than impress, as above mentioned, upon the people some sense of the matters that were indispensable to our future existence. This, our Government had unfortunately wholly omitted to do. It should at least have been grateful that the task had been undertaken for it by a great popular movement, and should have made use of the movement in the way one can be sure that an English or French Government would have done. At this very time, if it was necessary and possible to conclude a peace of renunciation (which the Fatherland party could never prevent), the Government, relying on the existence of that party, could have stood out for better terms. It is also an essential point that during the

whole period of the party's existence no opportunity arose for a peace of understanding. Nothing but the everlasting and baseless delusion of our democrats, that Germany, to obtain an acceptable peace, had but to ask for it, made it possible to attach the name of "never-endians" to the men whose views, had they been allowed to prevail, would have brought the war more rapidly to one or the other conclusion. The parties really guilty of prolonging the war were those who steadily undermined our power of resistance, and gave the Entente that certainty to which Lloyd George has given expression.

The Fatherland party did not achieve its aim, and indeed could not do so when it was opposed not merely by the hostility of the authors of the peace resolution, but also by the strong machinery of the Prusso-German State. Its work of political explanation, however, was not in vain. If anything can give us hope that German patriotism will again build us a strong and habitable German home, it is the fact that, after three hard years of war, and in spite of the activities of Bethmann and the democrats, a movement could arise of such power and patriotic feeling as this party displayed. The spiritual and material liberation of our country, which is now fallen under foreign domination, and the foundation of a new well-being, can only be begun when disaster has led to disillusion and disillusion has awakened in all sects and classes of our people a spirit of self-sacrifice and a determination to maintain Germany's civilization.

VIII

When in October, 1918, the democrats who had come into office seemed likely to make the terrible mistake, unprecedented in history since the time of Carthage, that one could throw oneself on the mercy of one's enemy without perishing, I wrote the following letter to the then Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden:

"BERLIN,
October 17th, 1918.

"YOUR GRAND-DUCAL HIGHNESS,

"In accordance with orders, I have the honour to transmit hereby my views on the present position.

"I regard as fundamentally false the political tactics which we have adopted towards England and America both before and, above all, during the war. We assume in our opponents points of view which we alone, not they, possess. In these tactics I perceive one of the greatest causes of the war and of our present position. The aim of the Anglo-Americans, followed with the most delicate political cleverness and the greatest consistency, has been the destruction of Germany, as a further step towards world-domination by their capitalism. It was only by a display of strength and particularly of determination that we could impress upon them that the business was not a paying one, and thus secure for ourselves tolerable conditions. Our continually repeated public offers of peace have constituted grave tactical errors. Wilson's demands rose at each such step. We did not understand that we were faced by deliberate extortion. Their talk of peace and the happiness of the nations are noble, but most naïvely intended only for the bene-

fit of their own peoples; they are designed, too, expressly for the politically unsuspicious German people.

"Our latest offer of peace and armistice, which is so accommodating as to amount to a renunciation of any claim on our part to rank as a great power, has been answered bluntly by Wilson with a demand for our complete disarmament. He knows quite certainly that the cessation of the submarine campaign makes any further resistance on our part impossible. This demand for cessation of submarine warfare, the present and future importance of which is shown by Churchill's speech to be thoroughly understood in the enemy camp, forms the kernel of Wilson's note, which is surrounded by a husk of pathetic moral indignation. As this indignation, were it limited to the war at sea, would be too transparent, a further covering is provided in shameless libels on the army. At the same time, Wilson is beating the victory drum and working his people up to the highest pitch of fury. He would certainly not do this if he intended to treat us with any leniency afterwards. The reverse will be the case, notwithstanding the suggestions in his note. These are merely the tricks of the political extortioner.

"Wilson's answer shows further that it was quite a mistake to assume, if anyone did assume, that the Entente would be so obliging as to concede us an immediate armistice on any terms that would admit of our putting our army and our frontiers in a position of defence in the event of the peace negotiations breaking down.

"There is but one means left to secure better terms, perhaps even but one means to secure the existence of German civilization. We must make an appeal to the whole people to defend with determination our honour and our future existence, and we must at the

same time act at once, both at home and abroad, in such a manner as to leave not the least doubt of our determination. This is the right course to follow, even if we are even now desirous of answering in an accommodating spirit. If we were to answer in that spirit, there is grave risk that neither the enemy nor ourselves would believe that we were still in earnest. The decline in our morale and sense of honour, beginning at home, has travelled through our lines of communication and reached the fighting fronts. The troops cannot hold out and fight when they see only too clearly that everything is being sacrificed at home. What are the men to fight for, and how are their officers to keep up their morale? It is impossible under such circumstances.

"We require resolute reinforcement of the western front with every available man, the formation of citizen battalions for the maintenance of order at home, and the relentless prosecution of the submarine campaign, which has had far greater effects than is believed at home. We must take every imaginable measure to maintain the spirits of the troops, the officers must have the same rations as the men, and the Government itself must give the widest possible explanations of what is really at stake. Every German must understand that if we do not fight on, we fall to the level of wage-slaves of our enemies.

"To carry through this policy, a dictatorship, such as the enemy in direct contrast to ourselves have established, is essential. It is absolutely immmaterial of what party tendencies this executive power is composed, for its activities must be directed simply, solely, and exclusively against the external enemy.

"These are my views, hastily dictated, but the product of the thought of years; they have nothing

whatever to do with Chauvinism, annexation, or a failure to understand our need for peace; they are directed solely to the rescue of our people from the supreme danger. My policy may not succeed, but it at any rate offers the only possible avenue to success, for other courses lead with certainty to a shameful issue.

"If your Grand-ducal Highness desires to have a further opinion on our naval position, I strongly recommend you to grant a short interview to Admiral von Trotha, the Chief of Staff of our High Sea fighting forces, who is at present here. There is no one so capable of giving so clear a general opinion on the matter as this officer, who enjoys the confidence of the whole navy. I believe that he is staying with Admiral von Müller, the Chief of the Naval Cabinet. Having regard to the urgency of the subject, I have ventured to send a copy[1] of this letter to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and to Secretary Scheidemann.

"Your Grand-ducal Highness,

"I remain with the greatest respect,

"VON TIRPITZ."

Prince Max's Government rested on appallingly dishonest and anti-national influences. The submarine

[1] Prince Max read this letter with great care, marking certain passages, and sending it on to the other Secretaries of State, at any rate to Vice-Chancellor von Payer and Secretary Solf. On October 17th and 18th the majority in the Imperial Government were in favour of negotiating, sword in hand. On the 19th, however, the Scheidemann group, with the addition of Count Wolff-Metternich (a particularly unfortunate selection), succeeded in bringing the majority round. Wilson's desire, trading on our utter lack of political instinct, to render us defenceless before the negotiations were opened, was fulfilled, and with that our utter defeat was assured.

campaign was abandoned, our capitulation undertaken, and a peace of justice "agreed" with the Entente, and everyone who disagreed, every honest German-thinking man, was treated as an outlaw, although the army and navy could, without a doubt, have held out until the spring of 1919, and thus have rendered possible real negotiations for peace. In these darkest days of Germany's history, when we were still fully capable of making, with our sword in our hand, an offer of a just peace to our equally war-weary enemies, but instead rejected the opportunity and went down into chaos, I, in my capacity of chairman of the Fatherland party, wrote a further letter to the Chancellor, as follows:

"Berlin,
"*October 30th,* 1918.

"Your Grand-ducal Highness,

"You graciously received my respectful letter of the 17th instant, but in one important respect, to wit in connection with the submarine campaign, you have arrived at a decision which is contrary to my advice, and, I am told, also to that of our naval and military chiefs. I conceive it to be my duty, in the existing situation, to bring once again to the attention of your Grand-ducal Highness a consideration which I did not sufficiently emphasize in that letter.

"Every military retreat which is not to develop into headlong flight has to be accompanied by well-timed and well-planned counter-attacks against the advancing enemy. The same rule holds good beyond doubt, indeed, with even greater force, of a political retreat. Even if we feel convinced that we can

achieve nothing more by militay means, it must never be forgotten that for purely psychological reasons the desire of the enemy to avoid further sacrifices has now risen very high. In 1871 a similar attitude on the part of France, even after the armistice was concluded, rescued Belfort in the peace negotiations. In battle, if a soldier lays down his arms, he can count on mercy. But if this is done in the political field, if the losing party deprives himself of weapons and surrenders without dignity, his attitude commands anything but respect from the enemy, who is on the contrary more inclined to relentless 'punishment.'

"For these reasons, regarding the matter from a purely material standpoint, and leaving on one side the centuries of harm that would be wrought by such a shameful surrender, I can think of no worse peace than that which would be forced on us, if we were simply to capitulate at a time when we still have left to us a considerable power of resistance. The enemy, who can well estimate our true strength, will not treat us any more mercifully if we disarm prematurely, but all the more roughly and brutally, since to the sensation of victory will be added a feeling of contempt for us. Here again we are faced by the difference in the points of view of ourselves and our enemies. In this respect we should have fared better if we had sought peace through England rather than through America and Wilson.[1]

"I would like in conclusion to draw attention to

[1] I did not of course suggest that it would have been more advantageous to throw ourselves on the mercy of England rather than on that of Wilson. Such a capitulation meant national destruction in any event. I rather meant that, for negotiations sword in hand, it would have been more favourable from a business point of view to treat with England, mainly because of the effects of the submarine campaign. I am still of this view.

one more point. At the moment, not only are our enemies enjoying the full flush of victory, but their people have the feeling that at last they are at the point of securing the peace that they have longed for, for years, the end of sacrifices and hardships. All the nerves of the great masses are, as it were, screwed up to this. If we now make up our minds, in the face of the enemy demands, to a political 'Halt! About turn!' if we show our teeth once more in determined fashion, and declare that we will not accept these terms, the sudden need to resume the fight will have the greatest psychological effect. A terrible disappointment will await the war-weary masses of the enemy peoples, and a powerful movement will develop for forcing their Governments to reduce the terms. In connection with the increasing strength of the heroic resistance on our front, and the fully justified fear of Bolshevism, such an attitude can alone give any prospect of obtaining tolerable conditions.

"Your Grand-ducal Highness,

"I remain with the greatest respect,

"VON TIRPITZ."

As I wrote this, I had but fugitive hopes that the attitude of our "rulers" could change. The letter formed the conclusion of my political activities.

The unfortunate result of the war has given to those who are really responsible for the disaster the opportunity, although hardly the right, to accuse before the uncritical masses the men who, if they had had a free hand, could have won the war or at the least brought it to an honourable conclusion. A court for State trials is, it is said, to be established; if this is done, there should be placed in the dock others than those

who will be called thither, including many who will want to sit as judges. I would gladly have spared the feelings of others, but I must expose before history the system which has brought us to destruction.

This political system, which Bethmann-Hollweg, doubtless unintentionally, had in fact aided greatly in developing, and which at present enjoys an almost grotesque access of strength, involves the sacrifice of all our constitutional achievements by a blindly credulous adoption of the avaricious and dishonest misrepresentations of our foreign enemies, and of certain international dreams of our own. We seem to have forgotten all our traditions, and all the experience gained by the tragedies of our history, through which we shall need to pass again.

I am convinced that our enemies, in their desire to attack us, found their opportunity, or their pretext, in this system. At home, it so softened our policy that our people lacked the necessary moral strength to hold out through the world-war. The same system was the true cause of the strength of our navy not being brought to bear in the war. The same system gave us the wrong strategical aim during the war, turning us to attempt the defeat of Russia while sparing England. The same system is to blame for the unexampled stupidity and loss of dignity involved in our capitulation in the autumn of 1918, the terrible results of which it made worse by subsequent follies. After the revolution the same system raged against the last remnants of political intelligence left to us,

so that it seemed to have become a shame and a crime to be a German, which it was once my greatest happiness and pride to be. Firmly led, there is no more capable people in the world than ours; but in the hands of bad and incapable leaders the German people is its own greatest enemy. It will soon tire of the black-red-and-gold pre-Bismarckian imitation of a State that has for the present been foisted upon it; but what will then be left to it of the essence of the good old State, which our enemies envied so much that with the help of our radical democrats they set about the destruction of all its virtues, its monarchy, its fighting power, the integrity and industry of its officials, the State-creating power of Prussianism, its patriotism faithful unto death?

We are now in a worse situation than we were at the end of the Thirty Years War. Without a new Potsdam, and an earnest effort to restore our self-consciousness, without a spiritual renaissance, without a wise, powerful, and dignified statesmanship, the German people will never again be free, but will slowly or quickly, according to its constitution and population, drop out of the ranks of the great nations; and then a new Weimar will be wholly impossible. We have fallen from the greatest height to the lowest depths, and it is idle to talk light-heartedly of reconstruction so long as one is ever sinking deeper. The ascent of recovery is terribly hard and difficult. It can and will succeed, if and only if our people are resolute and untiring in national fortitude and

national determination, like the French, the Italians, the English, the Serbians, and even in recent times the Indians. So long as we remain the people with the weakest national feelings, answering every seizure of our territory or other indignity with talk of reconciliation, thus leaving the insult unavenged and inviting further encroachments, so long as, lacking any national pride, we ape the forms and customs of other nations, and so long as fighting fellow-Germans of other parties means more to us than holding together against the foreign foe, so long can we never rise, but only fall farther. In the battle of the Alemanni, the Germans called to their chieftains, "Dismount from your horses," and with that they lost the battle. Internal dissensions have again brought us to disaster, for our generation, politically and in some sections morally too, was not great enough for its time.

Past, present, and future have thus shown me my duty, to fight this system.

But if on the other hand the German people awakes from the chaos of the collapse, and remembers with pride and emotion the strength, courage, and self-sacrifice which even during the war it has displayed under the Prusso-German State, then it will do right to count its events of the world-war among the most sacred memories of its national history. How, in spite of the poor quality of our allies, we held our ground against overwhelming superiority of strength, how we defied England's world-conspiracy against us, how we kept up our courage for years in spite of

the slanders uttered against our peaceful disposition, and in spite of the brutal destruction of the countless little settlements of Germans in all parts of the earth, and how our men by sea and land knew how to strike the foe and give their lives for Germany,—the memory of all this shall make future generations of Germans marvel, and give them faith. But Germany was, as in Luther's day, "A fine horse, needing but one thing, a rider." In every respect the fight that was forced on us bore promise of success, and even after all our errors it was still possible in October 1918 to resist a peace of destruction. But the greeds of internal politics, which throughout the war had been ready to capitulate to the external enemy, had seized the bridle of the riderless people.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HIGH SEA FLEET IN THE WAR

1. The navy at the beginning of the war.—2. The achievements of the navy.—3. The plan of operations.—4. My verdict.—5. The crippling of the fleet.—6. The lack of a Supreme Command.—7. The Battle of Jutland.—8. The last phase.

I

I COME now to the most painful part of my task, the discussion of the causes why our fleet, after our politicians had failed to avoid the outbreak of war, was not allowed to win us a just peace in battle, but itself met the most shameful end. I have no intention of giving a naval history of the war, which would be outside the scope of this book, but I desire merely to mention the points that are essential for the formation of a judgment on the fleet; and in the first place I would mention that even our army, which at the outbreak of war had reached absolute perfection, had finally to succumb to overwhelming superiority. I have already refuted the suggestion that, but for the navy, there would never have been a world-war, for it has for many years been a cardinal point of England's policy not to suffer any defeat of France.

In the year 1914 our naval power was already considerable, but it was not large enough to provide that margin of safety which is a necessity in peace and war; it was still in the full course of its development

when it was faced with war against the five greatest naval powers, to which in 1917 the United States of America was added.

In spite of everything, I am still to-day convinced—and that is the tragedy of the result—that the fleet could have fulfilled its destiny, and could have aided us to secure an honourable peace, if a right use had been made of it. The fleet was good, the men full of eagerness for the fight and highly trained, and the material was superior to the English. The most striking proof of the fighting value of our navy, and of the high opinion held of its capacities by the enemy, is to be found in the fact that the English avoided a meeting, and that the more emphatically the longer the war lasted. In spite of their ever-increasing superiority, they never attacked our forces of set purpose. They never sought any encounter. In the end our fleet was seized with the same disease as attacked all Germany. If it broke out on our large ships a few days earlier, and in a more striking form than occurred in the army, the real reason for this is merely the close relations which could spring up in the dockyards between the agitator-ridden masses of the working classes and the crews, and more especially the stokers. This party-political movement which was controlled from Berlin was permitted to exist by the Government then in power.

As in the whole population, so too in the fleet, the war was begun with the confident belief that there was not a man in Germany who had wished for war;

cleverly as England had utilized the opportunity that was offered to it in 1914 to bring the war about, its long-prepared plan for the destruction of our future had become far too widely known. As a result, the morale of the navy at the beginning of the war was very high, and permitted us the most rosy hopes. Old reservists on their recall begged to be allowed to serve the guns and not to work in safety below decks on the ammunition hoists. Our torpedo-boat commanders were longing for the order, "Z flag to the fore." [1] The cadets and midshipmen from the naval college, which was closed, and the training ships, which were placed out of service, were wild in their desire to get on board ship, even if only as captain's messengers. The usual prizes for records in coaling were refused by the stokers and seamen, who said: "We work without prizes." Engineers and fighting ranks vied with one another in bringing their ships to the highest point of readiness.

Every man in the navy was quite clear at the outbreak of war that he was meeting an enemy possessed of a great superiority in strength, and whose invincibility at sea had become almost a dogma. French, Russians, Italians were, so to speak, not reckoned at all as opponents. In peace the German and English navies had had a particularly great respect for each other. The story that our naval officers' messes used to drink to "the day" (the battle with the British fleet) is of course pure invention; it is merely one

[1] The signal to attack.

of the many lies in the long chapter of attempts to fasten on us a desire for war, with which the Press of the world was flooded. Besides, the fellow-feeling for the English naval officer was much too strong before the war, and our admirably correct attitude would have made such conduct wholly impossible, apart altogether from the stupidity of wishing to seek battle with an enemy twice our strength.

Before dealing with the two main causes of our fleet's being prevented from working out its destiny, I will give a short account of the actual effects which the fleet did have on the course of the war.

II

At home the fleet, unaided, kept our long coast from the Memel to the Ems free from all enemy attacks; not a gun was fired at our coasts. Its virtually unlimited mastery of the Baltic ensured the free import of the materials, and in particular of the ores, which formed an urgent need of our war industries, and protected the left wing of our forces in the East against raids in the rear, which had been planned by the Russians and had been a feature, I believe, of the naval convention concluded between England and Russia in 1914. Later the fleet rendered possible the carriage of reinforcements by sea. The successful undertaking against Ösel and the Moon straits under the command of Admirals Schmidt and Behncke, in happiest co-operation with the army, assisted in breaking the last resistance of the Russians.

The fact that our fleet was not defeated, and that the English could not accordingly establish a closer blockade of our coasts, made it possible for the northern powers and Holland to remain neutral in spite of British threats. In the first decade of the present century, when our fleet was still weak, England had planned a landing in Jutland, involving a violation of Denmark similar to that to which Greece was later subjected. In the face of the German fleet this was impossible.

If one imagines for a moment that our fleet had been completely defeated, or that it had never existed, one can realize how grave the consequences would have been for us, both economically and from a military point of view. With a northern front broken in, or even severely threatened, we could not have held our fronts in the east and west. But there are other considerations too. Our fleet forced the British to undertake an enormous increase of their own sea forces. The numbers of their navy alone were more than tripled. The entire complement of men employed for sea warfare on the British side must have been from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000, a figure involving a very great relief to our western front.

In the preceding chapter I have pointed out what a blow would have been dealt to England by the occupation of the French Channel ports by our army. Such an occupation could only, however, be a substantial, perhaps even a decisive, danger for England if we had a fleet which could use these ports as a base.

In the hope of realizing this, the marine corps was formed, constituting the only direct war activity which I, in the Admiralty, could achieve for the fight against England.

Our army, however, was unable to reach the northern French ports, taking only the Flemish harbours, which, owing to their geographical position, were of much less importance, as they did not directly threaten the Channel. In addition, they could only accommodate submarines and torpedo boats. Nevertheless they had the great advantage that the distance thence to the English coast was only a quarter of the distance from our German river mouths, and thus relatively smaller submarines, which could be built in a shorter time, were suitable for employment here. Attacks by English naval forces on Zeebrugge and Ostend were to be expected. As I doubted whether the army would be ready to undertake the necessary organization of the coast defence, and as, on the other hand, the landward fronts of our naval ports were no longer really threatened, it seemed wise to form out of the men thus released a Marine Corps for the defence of the Flemish coast. The army consented to this, but only on condition that the corps should be under army command. In order to get at any rate something done, I fell in with this stipulation, although experience shows that in all combined operations of army and navy the danger is ever present that the particular objectives of the latter may be neglected. The Emperor studied the matter with the greatest under-

standing and gave me extraordinary powers for the work of formation. Our marine infantry, which had to form three regiments out of two battalions, were picked troops from the very first in spite of this great dilution, thanks to their three years' service system. The naval gunners, drawn from various forts and garrisons, were to undergo their infantry training in the neighbourhood of Brussels, but owing to the operations in September had to be employed against the Belgian army advancing from Antwerp, some of them being detrained and marched straight into battle. These troops showed their value here, as well as later in the capture of Antwerp and in four years of stationary warfare. With the passing of time the Marine Corps under Admiral von Schröder rendered the seaward flank of our western front impregnable, and with various contrivances turned the Flemish ports into quite serviceable bases for T.B.D. and submarine warfare. Our forces stationed there, although unfortunately I was not strong enough to secure them sufficient accessions of force from home to make them as powerful as Admiral Schröder and I could have wished, were a sharp thorn in England's side right up to the autumn of 1918.

In the early months of the war, also, the eastern half of the Mediterranean developed into a theatre of war of increasing importance.

Already on August 3rd, as news had come of the conclusion of an alliance with Turkey, I had, in spite of the hesitation of the Chief of the Naval Staff as

to the *Göben* and *Breslau,* sent instructions to our Mediterranean squadron to attempt to break through to Constantinople. This order was cancelled on August 5th, as the embassy in Constantinople, in view of the position there, thought that their arrival would not yet be desirable. The vessels were now instructed to go to Pola, or else to break through into the Atlantic.

There was a naval agreement, concluded in time of peace, between Austria, Italy, and ourselves, according to which in the event of war our whole naval forces were to be assembled together in the Straits of Messina against the double alliance. On the proposal of the Italians, the command of the triple fleet was to be in the hands of the Austrian Admiral Haus; I do not discuss the question whether this had been seriously intended. The Emperor was particularly proud of our Mediterranean squadron, while I regretted the absence from the North Sea of the *Göben* in particular. When the *Göben* and *Breslau* arrived at Messina, after successful bombardments of Algerian ports, they met neither the Italians nor the Austrians, and the former, who had declared strict neutrality, scarcely allowed them one coaling at Messina. Enemy ships were cruising at both ends of the straits. As Austria had not yet declared war against the powers ranged against us, difficulties of form stood in the way of our gaining help from the Austrian fleet. The Admiralty's demands were answered on the afternoon of August 5th by the Foreign Office to the effect that our ambas-

sador at Vienna had been instructed to press urgently for a declaration of war. In the evening the news arrived that the Austrian naval commander, owing to the position, the distance, and the state of readiness of his fleet, was unable to help—a typical instance of our preparation for the war in the political field. Under the circumstances Admiral Souchon was informed by telegraph that he might himself choose in what direction he should break through. He thereupon, following the lines of the orders he had at first received, chose the way to Constantinople.

The whole Turkish question received its definite favourable ending through the success of this breakthrough. Before the war, our Eastern policy had always seemed mistaken to me, as Germany's only real prospects of release from encirclement were to be found through Russia; but once we were actually at war with Russia all considerations of this sort vanished, and I accordingly supported Turkey so far as lay in my power. Her weakness made it impossible for her to remain neutral in the long run, and the arrival of our vessels made it possible to ensure that she came in on our side rather than against us. The support which the German navy was able to give to Turkey under the difficult circumstances is an episode of itself, and it can only be mentioned here that our navy took a leading part in the glorious defence of the Dardanelles, thus assisting in the saving of Constantinople. On this depended victory or defeat on the Balkan front, which was so important for the

Central Powers. The approach from the Mediterranean to Russia thus remained closed, while the maintenance of communications with Asia Minor rendered possible our serious threats against the English in Egypt and Mesopotamia, which drew off in that direction strong English land forces and transport vessels. With our "dry-land" point of view one is apt to forget that the British attempt to force the Dardanelles was undertaken with insufficient strength, and accordingly failed, only because our fleet forced England to keep the greater part of her navy concentrated in the North Sea. Thus the distant effects of our naval strength protected Turkey. We helped Austria too by sending her submarines, and established bases in Pola and Cattaro.

The entry of Japan into the war wrecked the plan of a war by our cruiser squadron against enemy trade and against the British war vessels in those seas, leaving our ships with nothing to do but to attempt to break through and reach home. On its way home the squadron, under the brave Count Spee, destroyed without appreciable loss to itself the English squadron stationed off the coast of Chile, whose commander had only shortly before the outbreak of war enjoyed friendly social intercourse with Spee. Only one small English cruiser escaped from the battle of Coronel.

The ammunition left to Count Spee after the heavy expenditure in this engagement seemed to me insufficient for a second battle, and we had news of the assembling of strong English forces on the east coast

of South America. I therefore proposed that we should place Spee, with whom we could communicate by wireless via Valparaiso, at liberty to avoid the east coast of South America, making his northward voyage in the middle of the Atlantic or nearer the African coast. My intention was to draw Count Spee's attention by this message to the fact that having regard to his shortage of ammunition, we did not expect any further active operations of him, and that the main part of his task was now to make his way homewards. Spee would then be able, sailing his ships separately through the vast tracts of the Atlantic, to get home in the same fashion as was later followed by the *Möwe* and other vessels. The prestige of Coronel would then have been established in the eyes of the world.

As Count Spee was not informed of the general position of the war, such an instruction from home seemed to be highly desirable. The chief of the Naval Staff, however, regarded it as unwise. There were differencs of opinion between him and myself on the matter. He was unwilling to encroach in any way on the freedom of action of the Count, who, he thought, would be better informed as to the strength of the English forces than we were. Unfortunately this was not the case. Our cruiser squadron was destroyed at the Falkland Islands by a force of crushing superiority, including two dreadnought cruisers, whose presence had not been anticipated by Spee.

Questions have been asked as to what can have

moved the distinguished admiral to make the Falkland Islands. To destroy the English wireless station there would not have been of much purpose, since that station would have done all it could when it sent out: "The German squadron is here." The attempt may have been due to the fear on the part of these brave men, in their ignorance of the war situation, that the war might reach its end without any further achievement on their part. The victory of Coronel had increased the pride of our fellow-countrymen in all parts of the world, and now the loss of the crews, who, with Count Spee and his sons at their head, refused to surrender, awakened sorrow and admiration in every heart.

The single cruisers stationed in different parts of the world also did their duty fully. This cruiser warfare, which could not last long owing to the lack of bases, had been very well prepared by the Naval Staff. Agencies, and the supply of coal and stores, fitted their work in well so long as the prestige of Germany in the world was not falling. The activities of Captain Müller on the *Emden* and those of the *Karlsruhe* were glorious and effective. The commander of the *Karlsruhe,* Captain Köhler, never dreamt of taking advantage of the permission to make his way homeward; working with four auxiliary vessels in the Atlantic, surrounded by English cruisers, but relying on his superior speed, he sought ever further successes, until he was destroyed with his ship by an explosion, the probable cause of which was some unstable ex-

plosive brought abroad. The *Königsberg,* under Captain Loof, succumbed after severe fighting against great superiority. The commander and a large part of the crew subsequently went through the campaign in East Africa under General von Lettow-Vorbeck. Good and loyal Germans also earned much honour in later cruiser undertakings. Bold enterprise let the auxiliary cruisers *Meteor, Greif, Möwe, Seeadler,* and *Wolf* through English waters to the ocean. Their spirit of enterprise, however, was but the spirit of the High Sea fleet, for they were manned by officers and men of that fleet. Our ships abroad could not produce any permanent effect on the course of the war, since, deprived as they were of the assistance of any base of their own, they could only hold out for limited periods. Nevertheless, the losses which they caused to the enemy must have been at least three times as great as the strength involved on our side. It is remarkable that our ships were never destroyed on the high seas, but only when they were forced to come to the land.

If one keeps before one these effects of the navy on the course of the war, one is bound to confess that its deeds were great and glorious. I know of no case, apart from the final collapse, in which the crews did not fight with the greatest courage and devotion, or in which the superiority of our *personnel* and *matériel* was not displayed. It would not be unjust to say that nothing more could have been demanded of a fleet fighting against enemies five times its own

strength with no base abroad and with a bad strategical position at home. Nevertheless our navy was so good that it could have achieved the greatest things had it only been encouraged instead of being blocked.

I thus come to the two fundamental causes why the navy's highest aim, the winning of a just peace by battle, could not be attained. The one cause of the navy's tragic fate, as has already been mentioned, is to be found in the obstacles placed in the way of its active employment throughout the war for political reasons; the other cause is the lack of a single responsible command of the whole of Germany's naval strength.

III

The plans of operation which I settled in the 'nineties of the last century, and at that time submitted for the approval of the Chief of the General Staff, all presupposed the benevolent neutrality of England. When in the middle of the 'nineties this supposition had to be modified, I was no longer, as Secretary of State, concerned in the working-out of the plans of operation. Nevertheless, I always exchanged views with the Chief of the Naval Staff, according to his character. When Count Baudissin was Chief, in 1908, he put in the forefront of his plan the immediate and unhesitating engagement of battle by the active fleet, with which I was fully agreed. In subsequent pre-war years, however, the plan of operations was treated by the Naval Staff as secret even from me.

The plan of operations which, in accordance with the Cabinet order of July 30th, 1914 (to be discussed later), was now laid before me by von Pohl, the Chief of the Naval Staff, in the event of an English declaration of war, consisted, as I found to my surprise, of short instructions to the commander of the North Sea fleet to wage for the present only guerrilla warfare against the English, until we had achieved such a weakening of their fleet that we could safely send out our own; if before this time there should be any good prospects of a successful battle, a fight might then be undertaken.

At that time there was a strong Press campaign in favour of the so-called guerrilla warfare, supported amongst others by certain discharged naval officers. It was forgotten that the whole prospects of such fighting depended on the enemy being kind enough to provide us with opportunities, which they were not likely to do. Guerilla fighting would only have been feasible if the English had decided on a close blockade of our coasts immediately after the outbreak of war. Whether it would even then have been the correct policy, I need not discuss. The news from England, and especially the plan of their strategical manœuvres, made it improbable that a close blockade of the German coast would be undertaken.

The Chief of Staff thought personally that more weight should be given to the English eagerness to come to blows, and expected that there would assuredly be a battle in the neighbourhood of Heligoland, which

would of course be the most favourable position for us. I learnt later that the specialists on the Naval Staff held the view on this question that the British strategy would become clear in the first few weeks of the war, and that new directions could then be given according to what that strategy proved to be; they were also of the opinion that the addition of several large battle-ships of the *Kaiser* class, and the reserve squadrons, which had been mobilized, but were not yet ready for action, made our prospects in battle more favourable from October onwards than would be the case in the first weeks of the war. Political obstacles were not expected in any naval quarter. From the point of view of numbers alone, the above attitude was not incorrect. The only point of anxiety lay in this, that early orders imposing restraint might easily lead to our wasting favourable opportunities, a recurrence of which, having regard to the impossibility of prophesying the enemy's line of action, could not be regarded as certain, and at the same time to giving the enemy advantages which we could not estimate. I accordingly raised objections to this plan of operations, which were recognized by the Chief of Staff to this extent only, that they were altered to read that, in the event of good prospects appearing for a successful battle, a fight must, not merely might, be undertaken. I considered that with this the commander of the North Sea fleet retained sufficient freedom of action.

In favour of immediate activity on the part of

the fleet, apart from political factors, there were to be reckoned the probability that considerable naval fighting forces were immobilized in connection with the transhipment of British troops across the Channel, the fact that the British had not really any more experience of modern naval warfare than we had ourselves, and lastly the circumstances that at the beginning of the war they were not yet acquainted with the superiority of our naval guns and other material. They were probably not enlightened as to the terrible strength of our armour-bursting shells, which would gain double effect by surprise, even by their defeat at Coronel, the cruiser fight of January 24th, 1915, being the first occasion on which they certainly learnt of it. And, finally, another point in favour of immediate action was the holy eagerness for battle of our whole *personnel,* who longed for the opportunity to compete with the great achievements of the army.

Against an immediate fight was the fact that the whole English fleet was ready for battle when the war broke out, owing to the test mobilization, whereas only our active squadrons were ready. Further, Pohl had, much to his officers' regret, yielded to the pressure of the Foreign Office, which desired, in order to preserve a pacific attitude, that the fleet on its return from Norway should be divided between the North Sea and Baltic harbours. As a result of this step, which did indeed give a new demonstration of our anxiety for peace, but impaired our readiness

for war, that part of the fleet which had proceeded to Kiel had first to coal, etc., and then to pass through the by no means safe Kiel Canal before it could join the remainder.[1]

Contrary to the expectations of many officers, von Ingenohl, who was in command of the fleet, was brought to take a strongly defensive view of the operation order, so far as concerned the battle fleet. The position was not altered by a few bold mine-laying undertakings on the English coast. Ingenohl was awaiting the English in the Bight of Heligoland in defensive formation, a point which they were bound to find out after a time. So arrived August 28th, a day fateful, both in its after-effects and incidental results, for the work of our navy.

Early that morning, in murky weather, small English cruisers and torpedo boats of the newest design had attacked our outpost vessels stationed between Heligoland and the coast, sinking an oldish torpedo boat. As the English vessels drew out to sea again, the order was given to our small cruisers lying in the river mouths to take up the pursuit. These ships, not being informed as to the general position, left their anchorages alone, without the support of the torpedo-boat flotillas which had been allotted to them, rushed out to sea with all the enthusiasm of the first fight,

[1] At the outbreak of war the canal was not absolutely finished, the draught being in places too shallow. Damage which in part was not discovered until the ships were at sea through loss of speed, excessive coal consumption, etc., was caused especially to the screws, hampering subsequent offensive operations.

and, about sixty knots from Heligoland, met a large number of enemy reconnaisance vessels, including four battle cruiers. It was doubtful whether heavier squadrons were present in the rear. The *Köln* and *Mainz,* fighting bravely against far superior forces, were shot to pieces and sank.

The crucial point seems to me to be that on the approach of the English the order was not instantly given, "The whole fleet to sea, with every vessel we have!" If there were larger elements of the British fleet in the Bight, there could be nothing better for us than to come to battle so near to our own ports. If the English had only weak forces, and fell back, the fleet had at any rate the opportunity of a remarkably good practice in the deployment of all our vessels from out of the river mouths and in their assembly, with the prospect of a battle. Unfortunately this was not done, nor were the cruisers reinforced. The order was merely given for one of the squadrons to put itself in a fuller state of preparation to sail. I, in G.H.Q., did not at first understand the incident, and I wrote to a friend who had been engaged for an explanation, mentioning at the same time the consequences that would arise if the fleet did not come to battle. In the answer which I received the view of the navy command, that we ought to await the English in the Bight of Heligoland, resting on our mine barriers there, was recognized as correct, and the loss of the cruisers was attributed to their recklessness. The judgment of the majority of officers was to the con-

trary. The crews too were disappointed that they had not come to a fight, and their bitter criticism found expression in some instances in a regrettable manner. Messages were chalked on the walls expressing their anxiety to come to blows with the enemy.

That mistakes should be made in the early stages of such a war was natural enough. In this case there were plainly results to be seen of the plan of operations being drawn up in the defensive spirit. It was now the duty of the supreme naval command to deal with the matter and point out the mistakes which had clearly been committed. If that were done the damage was soon repaired.

But the reverse course was followed. The Emperor did not wish for losses of this sort, and the Chancellor gained further pretexts for the doctrine of keeping back the fleet which has been described in the previous chapter. The outward sign of the victory of Bethmann's views were the orders issued by the Emperor, after an audience to Pohl, to which, as always, I was not summoned, directed to restrict still further the initiative of the commander of the North Sea fleet: the loss of ships was to be avoided, fleet sallies and any greater undertakings must be approved by his Majesty in advance, etc.

I learnt of this orally, and took the first opportunity to explain to the Emperor the fundamental error of such a muzzling policy. This step had no success, but on the contrary there sprang up from that day

forth an estrangement between the Emperor and myself, which steadily increased, not without encouragement from various quarters. A little later the rumour ran in Berlin that I was driving the fleet into battle for parliamentary reasons.

IV

As an example of the efforts which I made at this time, I publish below certain opinions which I sent to the Chief of the Naval Staff. Their aim was to bring about a battle. In my statements I adapted myself in passages to some extent to the views then prevailing, in order to get something done. Thus, for example, I recognized the view that we should make efforts to have the battle fought within a reasonable distance of Heligoland, a view correct in itself, but brought into one-sided importance by the Chiefs of the Naval Staff and the Naval Cabinet. Certainly the important thing for me was not the place of battle, but that battle should be joined. At this time, too, there was talk from time to time at G.H.Q. of a future doubling of the fleet. I fought consistently against the false "futurism" of this chatter; it is to this that the sixth paragraph of my letter of September 16th refers, a passage in which, through an almost incredible feat of distortion on the part of the opponents of the fighting policy, the suspicion was built that I attached more importance to future parliamentary successes than to anything else.

"LUXEMBURG,
September 16th, 1914.

"TO THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF, AT LUXEMBURG.

"With reference to our discussion of to-day, I humbly submit to Your Excellency the following points for consideration:

"1. The report of Admiral von Ingenohl of the 12th instant, Gg. 1738 A1, confirms the opinion which I had already put forward, that we cannot achieve an equalization of forces by means of the so-called guerrilla warfare.

"2. The aim of all our combatant and administrative work for twenty years or more has been battle. Accordingly we have relatively our best chances in battle. Nevertheless, having regard to our numerical inferiority, we must strive to give battle within a reasonable distance, at the most not more than 100 knots, from Heligoland.

"3. Our best opportunity for a successful battle was in the first two or three weeks after the declaration of war.

"4. As time goes on, our chance of success will grow worse, not better, as the English fleet receives a substantially greater increase by new building than we do, and keeps in full practice.

"5. In addition, the spirit of our men, which was admirable to start with, is bound to depreciate if there are no prospects of a fight.

"6. If one has confidence in our fleet, one must hold that in a battle the English fleet will suffer as many losses as we do. I personally have this confidence. In my view, the actual decision on such a matter can of course only be taken by the man who

has the responsibility for it, that is, the commander of the High Sea fleet. He must also have confidence in himself, and carry the genius of victory in his heart. Almost always, throughout the history of the world, smaller fleets have defeated greater ones.

"7. I cannot see the use of preserving the fleet intact until the declaration of peace.

"If we come to the end of a war so terrible as that of 1914, without the fleet having bled and worked, we shall get nothing more for the fleet, and all the scanty money that there may be will be spent on the army. The great efforts of His Majesty the Emperor to make Germany a naval power will have been all in vain.

"8. We must, however, wait for a short time before giving battle, until Turkey has definitely come in and the main decision has been reached in the west.

"9. I would regard the dispatch of our three available large battle cruisers, without other vessels and without support, against the supposed enemy blockade line at Lindesnaes, as a mistake, on the ground that the expenditure of force seems to me too great in comparison to the possible gain.

"VON TIRPITZ."

"CHARLEVILLE,
October 1st, 1914.

"TO THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF AT CHARLEVILLE.

"I have the honour to bring to your Excellency's notice the following comments on the letter of the Commander of the High Sea fighting forces of September 25th, 1914, which has been passed to me for information:

"I am of opinion that the submarine danger has

hitherto been underestimated, but that it is now exaggerated as a result of the success of U9.[1]

"Shooting from a submarine is extraordinarily difficult if the vessel attacked maintains a good speed and changes direction frequently when near submarines. Before the attack by U9 the three cruisers were strolling along at ten knots and the *Hogue* and *Cressy* were stationary when attacked.

"Nevertheless our corner of Heligoland, owing to the frequent presence of enemy submarines, is less fitted as a point of departure for offensive movements than we had hitherto assumed on the basis of our experience in peace-time. Its unsuitability is, however, perhaps due more to the enormous size of our fleet, which has to defile out of the narrow river channels, than to the submarines. Our peace-time manœuvres did not draw our attention sufficiently to this point.

"The fleet is now faced with the danger that it must either while away the war in virtual uselessness behind the river barriers, while Germany fights out on dry land the battle for its existence as a power worthy of the name, or else for honour's sake see itself compelled to go out to battle at a moment when the prospects of success are at their lowest.

"The present effect of our fleet (20 large battleships, about 25 pre-Dreadnoughts, 100 torpedo boats, etc.), could have been equally well achieved with much smaller forces, if we had merely confined ourselves to the defence of the Baltic.

"The English fleet, on the other hand, is achieving the full effect of a 'fleet in being': extraordinary and increasing pressure on the neutrals, complete destruction of German sea-borne trade, the fullest practical

[1] This refers to the tactical danger of submarine attacks on warships.

blockade, steady transport of troops to France. With all this is connected the isolation of Germany from news, and the incitement of the whole world against us.

"The English fleet, and England, are Germany's most dangerous enemy.

"The use made of our after all very strong fleet in no way corresponds to the relative strengths of the two fleets. I do not propose at the moment to go farther into the reasons for this, but merely to state a fact which we must all face.

"For this reason also I cannot agree that the maintenance of the fleet intact for the conclusion of peace can have the least political influence.

"With regard now to the second point, that we may be forced to give battle under unfavourable circumstances for the mere honour of our arms, the English need only to bombard Heligoland one morning from the north. A squadron of fast vessels, keeping a great distance and steering a zigzag course, would suffice. In such a case there would lie farther in the offing the whole English fleet—that is to say, every vessel they have, torpedo boats included, that is fit for high-sea fighting. In the Bight, before our river mouths, there would be stationed in such a case, not just one or two submarines—the highest number that the English can spare for keeping perpetual station in the Bight—but every submarine of long radius that they possess.

"It is in this risk, that we may have to fight for honour's sake in an unfavourable situation and without full preparation, that I see the greatest danger for our fleet.

"If the fleet continues to remain in its withdrawn position, its moral strength and capacity will of neces-

sity deteriorate, with results that may easily be foreseen.

"For these reasons I am of the view that Admiral von Ingenohl's initiative should not be limited in any way, and that it should be left entirely to him what he thinks possible and right to do under the circumstances. He ought not either to have to ask, for that too is a crippling of his initiative. He alone must decide. My personal opinion is that the fleet has considerably more fighting power than the present conduct of the war assumes. That is particularly true of our torpedo boats, which are not being used at all. That the English torpedo boats can attack viciously was proved on August 28th.

"For these reasons I am of the view that farther advances of our whole battle fleet have become an absolute necessity. To refer to the incident of September 22nd, in which the attack of our three large cruisers, which was ordered, did not take place, because fleets of twelve and sixteen ships were reported in the neighbourhood of Lindesnaes, why could not our entire fleet have sallied out? It is improbable that the whole English fleet would make such a cruise; and even if we had known that we had to face not merely the first fleet, but their entire forces, we could have taken measures to meet the situation, and lengthened the battle considerably, for example by letting the slower vessels follow on the same course at a distance of fifty knots (echelon order).

"It is now objected that in battles developing out of such attacks our damaged ships will be lost on the return. But why are we to assume that there will be many damaged ships? Is it not definitely one thing or the other? In a large battle, will not the bulk of the damaged ships be torpedoed, so long as the result

appears in doubt? Are the English not in the same position? The long nights are beginning now, and are our far more highly trained torpedo boats to be found wanting against the English fleet?

"The objection is also raised that the retirement to our river mouths will be barred by the detachments coming from the South of England. Is the distance to Heligoland so much greater from Lindesnaes than from England? And if we seize the initiative, will all the detachments of the British fleet be ready for instant departure and linking-up? Linking-up is as difficult for them as it is for us. There will not in the future be many English ships stationed at the Hook of Holland or anywhere in similar range. Fortune favours the initiative; (*Emden,* U9, *Königsberg,* U21). But if in the end it should prove impossible for us to withdraw to Heligoland, and we have to go into the Kattegat, we are after all at home there, and the English are not.

"Admiral von Ingenohl is now demanding that the Belts should be opened. After recent occurrences the Danes cannot well consent. The demand ought not indeed to be made, for the very reason that it must become known at once in England.

"In case of need we shall have to retire through the Kattegat and the Belts without asking. Besides, at the beginning of the war, Denmark gave us to understand that she was dividing the Little Belt into two parts, a Danish part by Baage which it was closing, and a German part, the Aroe Sound, which it was for us to look after. Denmark could take shelter behind this excuse, that we had used the German part of the Little Belt, and for our part there is no question of an offensive from the Belts, but only and strictly of the refuge of damaged ships. It would be

an act of necessity. Denmark would thus not declare war against us, and the worst that could happen would be a demand by the English for passage for themselves through the Belts. This they have not already demanded, only because it is not to their advantage. They have not recognized the right of the Danes to close the Belts, and indeed, according to the rules of neutrality as they stand, the Danes have not the right so to do. The passage through the Little Belt is thus available for us. The closing of the Belts by the Danes, which has so far benefited us, is now certainly a disadvantage.

"A favourable levelling-up of forces through guerrilla warfare is not to be expected, to judge from our experiences to date; indeed, the reverse is likely, which would have a bad influence on general opinion on the fleet. A similar bad impression will be produced by the impending storming of Tsingtao, and the slow but inevitable destruction of our cruisers in distant waters.

"There is nothing that argues against the concession of the fullest freedom of action to Admiral von Ingenohl. In my view it is necessary for the general conduct of the war. The operations and the forces in the Baltic should be adjusted accordingly.

"VON TIRPITZ."

"G.H.Q.,
"*October 11th,* 1914.

"TO THE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF, AT G.H.Q.

"The letter of October 6th of this year—168—addressed to the Chief of our High Sea fleet by Your Excellency, as a result of your audience of his Majesty, moves me to place the following matters before Your Excellency:

"1. The instructions that the fleet is to be held back

and is to avoid actions that might lead to serious losses will in my view result in the fleet never having an opportunity of a decision by battle. It is indeed more probable that the fleet will only succeed in finding favourable conditions for battle if it seeks, by attacks such as those proposed by the Chief of the High Sea fleet in his letter of September 25th, 1914—Gg. 2030—to force the enemy into a position which will permit us to attack parts of their fleet or to undertake night torpedo attacks against them. The appearance of our fleet outside the Bight of Heligoland will of necessity create some uncertainty in the dispositions of the enemy command, and lead to counter-measures that will bring their fleet, or substantial parts of their fleet, into the neighbourhood of our coast. It is only thus, that is, by our seizing the initiative, that the fleet can obtain the opportunity of giving battle or at any rate of successful torpedo-boat action. If it leaves the initiative to the enemy and waits in the river mouths until the latter more or less offers battle, it will always be faced by vastly superior and fully prepared fighting forces, against which it can hardly hope to deploy from the river mouths with any prospects of success.

"2. The energetic employment of torpedo boats is, in my view, only possible if these vessels can rely on the support of strong forces, or, best of all, of the whole fleet. Otherwise they must soon come up with mixed forces of superior strength, and thus achieve nothing. On the other hand, I hold that, if we can succeed in bringing our torpedo-boat flotilla either by day or night to bear against important parts of the British fleet, we can achieve great successes. A guarantee of this is to be found in their thorough efficiency, based on decades of training.

"3. The continual retention of our squadrons in the river mouths is bound to have a bad effect on the readiness of the fleet for battle. Not only is the whole fleet deprived of the chance to maintain its tactical training, but, without the least reflection on the *personnel,* one must recognize that in the nature of things their magnificent morale is bound to be affected as the prospects of warlike activities become ever more remote.

"VON TIRPITZ."

V

I did not mean that we could seek battle in any case, and in any position. I rather desired that the North Sea fleet should create by continual activity a position compelling the English to draw nearer to us. If a battle developed in this manner on our initiative, not too far from our home waters, there was a possibility, especially in the earlier part of the war, that the English would not throw the whole of their forces united into the fight. The history of the war, which it is not my intention to write in this book, will show that such opportunities were in fact given. At the beginning of the war the fact had not emerged so clearly as it did later that the British fleet fulfilled its *raison d'être* simply by lying quietly at Scapa Flow. Public opinion in the enemy countries might have made it very difficult at that time for the British to avoid battle. Even minor successes on our part might have driven them to seek us out.

There was further to be considered the comparatively favourable numerical relation between the two forces in the first year of war.[1]

Further, the mistaken and purposelessly exhausting guerrilla warfare was bound to depress the morale of the fleet. Although the moral endurance of the *personnel* lasted until 1918, and made our fleet capable of any battle, as was proved at Ösel at the end of 1917, it cannot be doubted that the systematic undermining of the men by the social democrats, which alone rendered possible the destruction of our sea-power and our whole empire, found a certain receptivity owing to the long inactivity of the navy.

The battleships lay behind their booms in or around the river mouths, without any apparently useful function, seemingly nailed fast, and the hard but monotonous daily service became almost unbearable after from five to seven years' unbroken life on shipboard. All peace-time comforts, scanty as they were, were banished from these iron boxes. At the same time, the men were always on the *qui vive,* so that they had

[1] The splendid increase we maintained up to 1914 as a result of the four-a-year programme prevailing from 1908 to 1911 fell off from 1915 onwards as a result of the two-a-year programme of 1912 and onwards. At the same time there came into the scale the enormous English increases from the programmes of 1910 to 1913, which we expected, owing to their great speed of construction, to be ready in the spring of 1915, but which in fact did not swing the scales against us until the autumn of that year.

little leave and hardly any relaxation. Thus with time this life, which would depress any but the most fish-blooded, became a school of grumblers and a hotbed of revolutionary infection.

While, however, in accordance with a fundamental principle of discipline, punishments for the weak or undesirable elements ought to be made more severe in war, especially when large numbers are mobilized, we had to surrender, in accordance with the whole policy of the Government, to the demands of our popular representatives, relaxing punishments and undermining the authority of the officers and petty officers by over-frequent pardons. Our enemies acted in exactly the opposite manner, just as we had done in 1813. At that time, when the Silesian Landwehr was threatening to break up, we even went so far, wth Blücher's approval, as to apply the remedy of flogging, in itself naturally inconsistent with the spirit of a fight for freedom. In the days we have lived through, however, the darkest days of Germany's history, our Government's fatal system of loosing the reins, even in matters of military service, held the field. Officers and petty officers saw clearly the harm that was done, but could only obey the orders of the authorities. After the sabotage incidents in the summer of 1917, the naval command again pressed upon the Government the necessity of rooting out the nest of treason in Berlin. The seriousness of this movement for the navy was probably never understood by the Government. I myself, with all the experience of

fifty-one years' service in the navy, regarded as absolutely impossible such a mutiny as broke out in the autumn of 1918.

When, in 1917, the leaders of the independent Socialists, instead of being prosecuted for high treason, as the navy expected, were shielded by the Reichstag and the Government, and permitted to continue their hellish activities, the doom of the sea-power of Germany was in truth sealed.

Wherever the centre of the revolution was not in touch with our crews, as was the case with the ships in the eastern part of the Baltic, and wherever, too, the ships kept in continual contact with the enemy even under dangers and with heavy losses, the morale remained unbroken. The naval history of all nations shows that it is difficult to maintain discipline on large ships in relative idleness. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was a mutiny in the English fleet at the mouth of the Thames and in the Channel, and Parliament had to negotiate with the mutineers. But whereas at that time there was a certain ground for insurrection, in the bad food (doubtful salt pork and ship's biscuits), the cruel and more or less arbitrary flogging, the numerous death sentences, etc., our men had no real ground for complaint. The majority of them did not even know what they were doing, the leaders of the movement taking advantage of the low state of their morale to bring the mutiny to a head on the large ships.

In dealing with the prospects of guerrilla warfare,

apart from its incorrectness in principle, one must remember that the very point in which we could not hope to compete with England is in the craft required for light warfare. The large colonial requirements of the English ensure this, and the development of our fleet had for similar reasons been concentrated on battle fighting. The possibility, too, that a battle might arise from the initiative of the enemy and not from ours, also constituted a danger for us. The English only needed to conduct a feint attack on our coast. An attack, for example, on Borkum or Sylt might easily force us to battle. For such a movement they could bring up their whole fleet, including a portion of their coastal vessels. We would then fight near our own ports, but against an overwhelming superiority of forces and at a point which could be rendered most unsafe and thus unfavourable by mines and submarines. It is true, as the facts have shown, that the English estimated our superior quality so highly that they did not even seek battle under these favourable circumstances.

The English squadrons, however, gained during the war experience of the sea and of sea-fighting in the wide waters at their disposal, thus equalizing the original superiority we had obtained by our training, so thoroughly undertaken in peace-time, and they became more and more imbued with the feeling that they were continuing the invincibility of the English sea-power of the Napoleonic wars.

The organization, the training, the point of view,

and the spirit of our navy were all directed to swift action and sudden attack, just as that of the army was directed to the war of movement. Battle offered us our best opportunity. The English hoped to gain their end without battle, and their hope increased as time passed. It was thus for us to force them to fight. The only right action, politically and strategically, was to seize the initiative. The fleet, by not being put to use, lost its *raison d'être*. It wasted the great strength it possessed, disappointing both the hopes of the nation and its own expectations. If the army and the diplomats had been equal to gaining a favourable result, the throttling of the navy might well have been borne; but it has been explained in the preceding chapter that the idea of our leaders, that we could come out of the war alive without showing the strongest military and political front against England, was a fatal illusion, and lay at the root of our loss of the war.

The prospects of a modern sea battle are difficult to estimate, and it is easy to fall into the error of calculating too much in mere terms of material. One often compares the relative strengths in the Navy Lists, making an equal deduction on each side for ships requiring repair, and forgetting that the side whose initiative brings about the battle can choose a moment advantageous to itself and unfavourable to the opponent. Numerical superiority is of course always important, but when it is not overwhelming, one has to consider also the quality of men and material,

the degree of tactical training, and the value of the leadership. Most of the naval victories in the world have been won by the smaller fleet. When fleets are over a certain strength, it becomes tactically difficult to reap the advantage of superior strength on the water, for in the main, after all, the battle is of ship against ship. As there is no land at sea, and outflanking, among other matters, is far less important than in land warfare, numerical superiority does not play the same important part as do the "biggest battalions" on land. Simultaneous fire of several ships on one target is of very doubtful advantage at the very long ranges that are now possible, for it renders artillery observation difficult, and in any case involves a wasteful use of ammunition, which is scanty, and, during the battle, wholly irreplaceable. Besides, all the naval fighting of the last century has confirmed the experience of Nelson's day,[1] that there is one critical moment in every battle; and that from the moment that one of the ships has established superiority of fire over the other, the latter's fighting capacity falls rapidly and soon ceases entirely, while the victor, if only injured above water, survives virtually intact for further activity. Thus in the few naval fights that have been fought out in modern times, the defeated party has lost everything, and the victor suffered extraordinarily little, as happened in the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Santiago, at the battle of Tsushima,

[1] A treatise on Naval Gunnery, by the English General Archibald Douglas, 1829.

and at the battle of Coronel. In this way the smaller fleet, if only her ships have a higher value in themselves, has within certain limits no need to despair in the face of a numerically stronger enemy. The consciousness of superiority in each ship is thus the foundation of the spirit of the whole fleet. Who can judge what the end of the battle of the Skager-Rak would have been if the night had not fallen? One need only remember that, at the long ranges at which the English preferred to fight, their guns could only fire some sixty shots before losing greatly in accuracy, whereas ours could last much longer. After the fight a feeling of definite superiority ran through our fleet.

What crippled our conduct of the war at sea in the early period, so rich in possibilities, was, besides the already-mentioned political obstacles, the naval prestige of England, which had its effect on our navy, or at any rate on many of the senior officers, who were too modest in their judgment of themselves and of our young navy. The habit of grumbling at our material, so popular in peace-time and in part encouraged in high quarters, had a bad effect on our energies, which should have gone far beyond the operation orders received. On this point one must be just, and not judge the navy of 1914 by comparison with the army of 1870, which had gained by the trials of 1864 and 1866 the full consciousness of its own strength and the confidence that it possessed the right leader.

The position was extraordinarily difficult for the commander of the fleet. He was only to risk a fight

under favourable conditions, but our unfavourable strategical position made it very difficult to recognize when such conditions were present, while we were able to learn from the wireless messages of the English that they were always informed immediately any substantial forces on our side even left the river mouths. This created the possibility of our striking an unfavourable moment, and we had always to be prepared for a substantial numerical superiority of the enemy. In addition, the commander, having regard to the local limitations of his position, could not keep *au courant* of the general, political, and military position so as to know whether it was necessary to come to battle within any given time. Equally little could he estimate the general results of a defeat, with the possibility of which he of course had also to reckon. He should, as a matter of principle, have been relieved of this responsibility. I shall return to this point later.

In their view of the position, the Chancellor, the Chief of the Cabinet, and the Chief of the Naval Staff were opposed to any offensive activity of the fleet against England. They were able to gain increased authority for their views owing to the respect which it was thought necessary to pay to the Russian fleet. My basic idea, that we must keep our forces as united as possible in readiness to deal the main blow at any time, whether against the chief enemy or for once in a way against a secondary opponent, never gained acceptance. In the whole of the first stage of the war

a substantial part of the fleet was cut off for use in the Baltic, without any useful result; and yet it was scarcely ever strong enough to have dealt a decisive blow in that theatre. Owing to the feeling that after all something must be done, several enterprises were carried out even right into the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Finland, but they always proved to be blows in the air, merely delaying or interrupting the massing of our strength in the North Sea. The opponents of the policy of seeking a sea battle with England even carried their Baltic views so far as to develop in several quarters the policy that the centre of gravity of the fleet should be definitely transferred to the Baltic. This view was approved by the Chief of the Cabinet among others. To my mind such a policy could only be considered if we had no longer any prospect whatever of bringing the English to battle. In that case the old Stosch plan of operation might revive in this sense, that we might deal a really heavy blow against Russia in co-operation with the army, and thus either make the country more disposed to a separate peace or tempt the English to come to the aid with their naval forces.[1]

[1] I may mention here that at the outbreak of war we had made an agreement with Denmark, by which the Great Belt was to be closed, under Danish guarantee, to all belligerents. England, however, did not recognize the right of Denmark to do this, and if the English had desired to force their way into the Baltic they would have had no difficulty in overcoming the weak Danish barriers. This agreement, which was unfortunately approved by myself also in the early days of the war, proved disadvantageous to us, since we felt constrained

In all the early period of the war I fought against the withholding of the fleet from the pursuit of its great aim and object. Our brave men did not know how often I struggled to establish the policy of the strategical offensive, but the greater number of the officers no doubt understood the tragic situation. The Emperor found it necessary on several occasions to quiet by messages to the fleet the anxieties as to whether the war was being conducted on the right lines. On September 7th, 1915, a Cabinet order was issued against the "incorrect conception of the whole position of the navy, which tends to cause depression."[1]

The Emperor urged the fleet—

"to maintain the spirit of cheerful fulfilment of duty even where there has so far been no opportunity for active employment in the face of the enemy, or where in all human probability, in view of the course which the war is taking, no such opportunity is likely to arise at all. . . . The greatly complicated conditions of the war make it particularly necessary that all officers should have confidence in the supreme command, which in deciding where to advance and where to withdraw

throughout the war to pay respect to Denmark, while it prevented us from improving, by the use of the Kattegat and the Skager-Rak, our unfortunate strategical position in the Bight of Heligoland.

[1] I quote here the main contents of this Cabinet order word for word, because certain conscienceless journalists used it, with convenient abbreviations, as a proof of the bad morale of the navy. The reverse is the case; the order was issued because the Emperor's advisers believed it necessary to restrain the overflowing eagerness of the fleet for battle.

has to consider all military and political factors, which in greater or less degree are withheld from the view of the people in general."

The order proceeds then to describe it as a grave political mistake, having regard to the strategical position in the North Sea, to send the fleet to battle under conditions which can be seen in advance to be unfavourable, and, after ordering officers not to presume to form judgments on the subject of submarine warfare, closes with the words: "I demand finally the dutiful subordination of all to my will as supreme commander; I carry the heavy responsibility for the future of the Empire, and the navy should be convinced that I would be only too happy if I could send it out unhampered to fight the enemy." These last words show the tragedy of the Emperor's position. The men who, in order not to irritate the British lion, recommended to his Majesty the shackling of the fleet, a policy contradictory to the whole spirit of the war, must have wholly failed to understand that this point of view involved the destruction of the Emperor's own great work. How could a nation build a fleet, and not send it to battle in its fight for existence? And on the other hand, how could anyone adopt the policy followed by Bethmann in 1914, save in reliance on mighty naval power?

On every occasion that offered itself, I placed before the Chief of the Naval Staff, orally or in writing, my views, which were wholly in contradiction to the spirit and tone of the Cabinet order. To submit simi-

lar documents direct to the Emperor seemed to me hopeless of success, and, as being beyond my province, only likely to increase the tension. I became more and more isolated. Already in the late autumn of 1914 persons in the Emperor's immediate entourage only dared visit me in my quarters after dark, in order not to expose themselves to misconstruction.

The touchiness of the Chief of Staff prevented me from getting into direct touch with Ingenohl, the commander of the High Sea fleet, a personally brave and chivalrous man. The impression which I gained on October 25th in Wilhelmshaven of the manner in which the fleet command did its work was the first incident to strengthen my anxiety as to whether the hitherto inactive attitude of the fleet was solely due to the instructions received from Headquarters. After the conference with me, Ingenohl obtained the Emperor's permission for an attack on Yarmouth, which was carried out on November 3rd. This, and a hopeful letter from Ingenohl of November 9th, in which he informed me of his confidence in the fleet in the event of an encounter with the English, which he expected to arise out of some such attack, gave me the task of securing him the utmost possible freedom of action. The Cabinet at that time were no doubt quite rightly of the opinion that a change in the command of the fleet would be at the least premature. It was not until after the later attacks of December 12th, and particularly of January 24th, 1915, and as a result thereof, that Ingenohl was relieved, his

place being taken by Pohl. This change, in connection with which the Chief of the Cabinet studiously avoided any contact with myself, started a movement within the navy which aimed at the union of all the various controls of the navy in one hand, with correspondingly large powers.

VI

When one bears in mind the complicated nature of our naval operations in the separate theatres of war, and the check imposed upon our activities by the limits of our possible reinforcements of *personnel* and material, one cannot doubt that a united command was the most urgent necessity for the proper massing and employment of our available forces. Just as the various authorities governing the land army, who in time of peace worked independently side by side, were united under a single G.H.Q. during the war, so should the navy also have had a single head. The tragedy of our naval warfare can be expressed in the one fact that a supreme naval command was not established until September, 1918.

Again, in all negotiations with the military or civilian authorities, nothing but a single supreme naval command could have the weight necessary to secure the successful conduct of the war against England.

The Emperor's personal retention of the command of his favourite arm was no substitute for united leadership. For apart from the many other duties that claimed the attention of the sovereign, it was

impossible that such an immense technical responsibility, for example, as the decision to force an early battle could be allowed to rest personally even upon him. The Cabinet advised the Emperor badly when it retained for him, and thus, for itself, the direct control of the High Sea fleet. The result was that the great sea weapon forged by the Emperor himself lay in a sense rusting in the Cabinet chamber, where the decision to send the fleet out could not be taken. The Cabinet, seeking for excuses for their own weakness, hit on the idea of blaming the material of the fleet. When, after Skager-Rak, the scales fell from the eyes of the doubters and they realized how greatly our ships were superior to the British, it was historically too late for repentance.

Whether the supreme command should be given to the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Secretary of State, or to some other official, was in itself immaterial, and a pure question of persons. The command should have gone to the individual enjoying the greatest respect and confidence in the navy. If this were the Chief of the Naval Staff, then he certainly should not have set up a hastily improvised machinery for dealing with questions of organization, politics, international law, and economics (which was what actually happened, owing to the separation of functions), but should have employed for these purposes the organization of the Admiralty, which had been developed in peace-time by the work of years for this very end. The dualism which prevailed in the war brought about

a gradual side-tracking of old and proved officials, and a disproportionate and often untrained activity on the part of newly created departments, which, with the jealousies inevitably involved, led to a fatal reduction of the authority of the navy in the Emperor's councils and of its prestige among the people. The Chancellor and the Foreign Office often had recourse, in questions with which the Admiralty alone was competent to deal, and on which that office had the accumulated experience of years, to the Chief of Staff, whose peace-time activities had not enabled him to realize that inadequate treatment of these questions, which were wholly strange to his officials, was bound to lower the prestige of the navy.

Although I could not of course foresee all the misfortunes that were brought upon the nation by the disjointed treatment of naval questions in the war, a right presentiment moved me as early as July 29th, 1914, to request the Emperor, through the Chief of the Naval Staff, to place the control of the navy in the hands of one man.

Had the Chief of Staff been a suitable person, I should have suggested him as the chief, just as later, when I despaired of any other solution, I offered to Admiral von Pohl at headquarters, in the presence of the other officers, to place myself wholly under him, if only he would discuss his decisions with me beforehand. It was, however, the unanimous view of the officers of the navy that it was impossible for me to propose to the Emperor the appointment of Pohl as

the supreme commander. He was a good seaman and an excellent navigator, and he had led a squadron very well; but he had no further capacities. Accordingly, I told the Chief of the Cabinet on July 28th that, in the then position of the parties concerned, the proposed office would presumably have to be entrusted to myself.

After audience of His Majesty, Admiral von Müller informed me that the Emperor had not seen his way to take this step, but that my co-operation was to be secured by providing that in all questions relating to the conduct of the war at sea I was to be consulted by the Chief of the Naval Staff, and that any unfavourable views on my part were to be brought to His Majesty's notice. A Cabinet communication ordaining this hapless half-measure was delivered to the Chief of Staff and to myself on July 30th, but it proved in the course of the war to be a dead letter.

The opinion was later expressed in the navy that at that time, when my influence was still of weight, I missed an historical opportunity, in not persevering to the utmost logical conclusion in my demand for a single leadership; but no one acquainted with the Emperor's character could have expected any greater success to attend my demands if I had appealed directly to His Majesty or had tendered my resignation. In the first case the Emperor would merely have discussed the matter with the Chief of the Cabinet before deciding, and in the second he would not have

accepted my resignation. And to have persevered in my request to resign because my own demand for a higher post had been refused was impossible for me as an officer. I should only have caused grave misunderstandings, and to no purpose. The army too, it may be remembered, had to wait two years for the leader it longed for, and the hint given in the winter of 1914-1915 in this direction by the man most trusted by the army brought no improvement, and merely made the possibility of his own further usefulness more difficult.

I did what I could; the rest was for others to attempt. What they did, and with what success, as I myself took no part in the discussions, I can best explain by quoting an extract from the diary of Admiral Bachmann, which has been placed at my disposal:

"*February 2nd,* 1915: . . . The Chief of the Cabinet informed me that I was to take the place of Admiral von Pohl. I begged that, if it were still possible, I should be passed over for the post, as I regarded the position of Chief of the Naval Staff at G.H.Q. as an absurdity. The war at sea could not in my firm conviction be controlled from G.H.Q., lying as it did far inland, nor should its conduct be hampered by the need for obtaining the decision of His Majesty on every occasion. It must, on the contrary, be under one and the same control in all theatres, and that in the hands of a single supreme commander . . . in the closest touch with the fighting naval forces, armed with the fullest powers and . . . able . . . at any

moment to take decisions independently. His Majesty should resign *de facto* the supreme command of the navy, and confine himself to laying down general lines of policy. After the earlier mobilization orders, I had never dreamt that such a commander would not be appointed immediately on the outbreak of war. The existing situation, with the Chief of the High Seas fleet and the Commander of the Baltic fleet and Marines each in command of one theatre, with the Chief of the Naval Staff at G.H.Q., as so-called leader . . . but without any proper power of command, was in my view disastrous and ought to have been abolished at the earliest possible moment. . . .

"When the Chief of the Cabinet asked who, in my view, could undertake this supreme command, I answered that in my view the only possible person was Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the man who had created the German fleet, with which his name was indissolubly linked. He possessed the greatest authority with the navy and the people, and the necessary personal qualities for this most important of all naval posts.

"Admiral von Müller expressed the view that, as Grand Admiral von Tirpitz had been out of actual service for eighteen years, he was no longer capable of leading the large forces which were now at our disposal.

"To this I answered that the actual leadership was primarily in the hands of the head of the fleet and the other commanders, and that provision could easily be made for the purely technical part of the general command by the appointment of an experienced staff. I was personally ready at any time to give up my position and to accept the appointment of Chief of this Staff, if I was thought to be suited for the post.

"The Chief of the Cabinet explained that it would still be impossible to appoint Grand Admiral von Tirpitz as supreme commander, since as a Secretary of State he was subordinate to the Chancellor, and that he had so frequently quarrelled during the war with the departments with which he had come into contact that his appointment would certainly lead to further conflicts. Further, he had forfeited a great deal of the confidence of the officers of the navy, since the material[1] of the fleet had not proved equal to the demands made upon it.

"I objected that it would be quite simple to release Grand Admiral von Tirpitz from his under-secretaryship for the duration of the war, and replacing him for the time by Admiral von Capelle, and that in my opinion the disputes which the Grand Admiral had had, the causes of which were quite unknown to me, should not be judged so severely as to justify the exclusion from the command of the navy of a man deserving so well of his country, and, further, that the fleet criticism of the material was in many points hasty and unjust.

"Admiral von Müller finally added that such a reorganization could not be improvised in war-time, and should have been prepared in peace-time if it was required.

"To this I could only reply, that in my view the appointment of the supreme commander could be carried out by a Cabinet order of a few lines in length.

"The Chief of the Cabinet closed the discussion with the remark that nothing could now be altered, and that I had been appointed as Chief of the Naval Staff."

[1] With regard to the material see *Appendix*.

Several other officers of high rank have informed me of similar steps taken by themselves, with like results. The real ground on which I was excluded was the difference between the strategical points of view of myself and the Cabinet. When at last the battle of the Skager-Rak showed the baselessness of the suspicions as to our material, which had been widely used against me in the country, I had already been dismissed and the general situation had been entirely changed to our disadvantage.

That curious and somewhat incomprehensible person, von Müller, Chief of the Cabinet, has an excessive share of the responsibility for Germany's fate. An amiable man of no mean artistic gifts, he made his reputation in Sweden and had a long career as a courtier, being very popular with the ladies of the Court and in society; at the same time he had a strain of fanaticism, being a teetotaller, a pacifist, and a friend of Stead. He was not primarily a naval officer. In contrast to his predecessor, Senden, he had failed to imbue himself thoroughly with the noblest and most distinctive features of Prussianism. In a sense, he succumbed to the temptations of his office, being too weak and lacking firm judgment of men and of naval or military questions. In discussion he was easily convinced, and as easily talked round again by a third party. Himself a master of language, he was easily captured by fine phrases such as Bethmann-Hollweg knew well how to turn. Much impressed with his own authority and living in the at-

mosphere of the Cabinet, "if he could not achieve anything, he could at any rate prevent anything." He of course only wanted what was best, but it was a great misfortune that two such congenial natures as his and Bethmann's came to work together in such intimacy.

Unfortunately the Emperor was slow in not realizing the extent of the combined influence of these two gentlemen on the formation of his own judgment, which was generally more correct. He rather saw in Müller an admirable go-between between the two markedly opposite characters of Bethmann and myself. Müller, however, was anything but a go-between, as had already been proved in peace-time, for he took Bethmann's side almost invariably; as he used to say at that time, he much regretted that he had to vote against his own colour.

The phrase has been used: "I will have nobody between myself and my navy." To encourage the illusion that the Supreme War Lord himself directed the operations of the fleet, there were people who took delight in asking the Emperor for instructions even in smaller undertakings of the fleet, and even in matters of detail. The Chancellor and the Chief of the Cabinet, who held Pohl in the hollow of their hands, made use of his peculiarities to inflate to an almost morbid extent his departmental jealousy of myself. I am anxious to believe that the serious malady to which he succumbed a year later was in part the cause of this. When we met shortly before

his final illness, he expressed his regret that he had not followed the same course as myself.

I had moved to G.H.Q. with the rest, and remained there so long as I had any hope that I should not entirely lose my influence with the Emperor. The whole atmosphere surrounding the important persons assembled there was absolutely strange to me, and I became more and more worn out. I now think that the position of under secretary, clipped and cut short on all sides, would have remained stronger if I had stayed in Berlin. A supreme commander, or rather a chief of the Admiralty, on the other hand, should not have been tied to any place, but should have been at liberty to go where he needed, sometimes to G.H.Q., sometimes to Berlin, sometimes to Wilhelmshaven or possibly on board ship. To take up his post on the flagship, where he would lose the general view of the situation, would have been as antiquated as for the leader of a modern army to remain on his horse on a hill on the battle-field.

I must renounce the task of describing in particular the damage caused by the lack of a unified command and the independence of the various navy departments and theatres of war. The bitterest recollection for most officers was the fact that no battle took place, and this filled them with the greatest anxiety for the future of their country and their navy. In 1806 events moved too rapidly for many to foresee the catastrophe before its arrival; but in this war many recognized it.

VII

In connection with the appointment of Pohl as Commander of the Fleet, which was received with the greatest astonishment by the navy, the Chief of the Cabinet attributed great importance to finding a successor to him at G.H.Q. who would fall in with Bethmann's naval policy. If, however, he regarded Admiral Bachmann as suitable from this point of view, then, as was so often the case, his judgment of men was at fault. Far from falling in with the Chancellor's policy, Bachmann was such a frank supporter of the views prevailing in the navy that his position as Chief of the Naval Staff was soon rendered difficult and he was succeeded by Admiral von Holtzendorff in September, 1915.

During his short tenure of office, however, Bachmann succeeded in obtaining full freedom of action for the Commander of the Fleet. Pohl, it is true, still held to his views in favour of the Baltic theatre, and felt himself bound to conform to oral instructions which he had received from the Emperor. At the same time, too, the actual prospects of success in battle seemed to become less favourable for us, owing to the increase of the English fleet through new construction and the more pronounced massing of the enemy's main strength. The most important operations were now those of the submarines, which were begun in 1915, without my approval and on

lines which in my view and that of Bachmann were not the most suitable.

When, at the beginning of January, 1916, Admiral Scheer replaced the now invalid Admiral von Pohl as Commander of the Fleet, he and his Chief of Staff von Trotha (his own choice) took over their duties with the firm intention of bringing the fleet more strongly to bear in spite of the less favourable general situation. Scheer accordingly took measures, and successful measures, to deal with the decline in morale brought about by the long previous inactivity of the fleet. The recent efforts of the British, undertaken at the cost of enormous exertions, to close our tract of the North Sea from Borkum to Jutland against our high-sea fighting vessels and submarines by means of broad minefields had already made it much more difficult to realize his intention of giving battle. To frustrate these efforts, we had to create a large organization of vessels to keep safe fairways open on a regular system through these minefields. We gradually developed a most exacting and dangerous minesweeping service, which cost us many losses, but nevertheless fulfilled its task in the main up to the end of the war. The fleet had to pass through these fairways to reach the open waters of the North Sea, and on its return to keep the same course. It is easy to see how this hampered our movements in comparison to previous years.

On one of their more distant advances, originally designed to reach the English coast, our cruisers, at

a considerable distance from the main body of the fleet, came up off the Skager-Rak with the numerically superior English cruiser fleet, and immediately attacked. The battle that thus developed soon made it clear that our vessels were substantially superior to those of the enemy. At the start there were six English battle-cruisers against five of ours. The air was clear as crystal, and the initial battle range some 15,000 metres. Eighteen minutes after opening fire, the battle-cruiser *Indefatigable* blew up, followed twenty minutes later by the *Queen Mary*.[1] In the further course of the fight the British were strongly reinforced by five of their newest ships of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, only completed during the war; these vessels, driven exclusively by oil-fuel, possessed such a high speed that they could take part in cruiser fights. They attached themselves to the English cruisers, and joined in the battle from long range. Up to the moment when the English Admiral Beatty, sighting our battle fleet, wheeled about and went on a northerly course, the fighting capacity of our squadron had hardly been diminished. The most badly damaged of our ships, the *Seydlitz,* had received three bad hits, including one from a 38-centimetre gun, as was later seen from the shell fragments. Even a torpedo hit, which she received later from an English destroyer, had little or no success, its effects being limited by the

[1] In this connection one should remember the criminally false reports that had been spread about the alleged inferiority of our large-calibre guns.

torpedo bulkhead. In the next stages of the battle the *Seydlitz* was able to attack the main body of the enemy fleet at high speed, receiving twenty more heavy hits, and nevertheless to return to port under her own steam. While the feeling of danger surmounted was still fresh in his memory, her brave commander, Captain von Egidy, sent me, to my great joy, a telegram of thanks in the name of his officers and men for the splendid material of the vessel.[1] Admiral Scheer and his Chief of Staff von Trotha learnt from the wireless reports that the cruiser fight was bound to lead to an encounter with the Grand Fleet, whose numerical superiority and at that time homogeneous composition of ships of the line of the battle class was well known to them. History owes them a great debt of gratitude, that they hastened out to battle with all possible speed. They formed a better judgment than had hitherto been held of the *personnel* and material of our fleet.

When our battle fleet accordingly began to take under their fire the English battle-cruisers and battleships which were making off to the northward, the "forward" position of the enemy prevented any of our vessels from firing save the battle-cruisers who had placed themselves in advance of the fleet and the leading ships of the *König* class under Admiral Behncke. The English admiral, moving gradually

[1] The public manifestations of gratitude from the whole fleet made it clear to me that the true value of our ships had been established by the ordeal of fire.

from a northerly to an easterly course, forced the head of our line also to turn. After defeating in a few minutes the battle-cruiser *Invincible,* and two armoured cruisers of the *Warrior* class, which came up at this point, the head of our line suddenly came upon the main body of the English fleet, lying in haze and mist and deployed in a long line; all the vessels of the fleet immediately opened a heavy fire upon us. The position thus became, by accident, tactically very unfavourable for us. Not only would our ships, in order to obtain a good tactical position, have had to deploy under the fire of the whole enemy fleet, but light was now such that the German ships were silhouetted against the evening sky in the west, thus presenting, in the occasional moments of good visibility, admirable subjects for artillery observation, while on the other hand the mist in the east so concealed the hulls of the British ships that their position was hardly to be discerned save by the flashes of their guns. Admiral Scheer withdrew from the position of danger thus created, by a simultaneous wheeling of the whole fleet, a manœuvre which few fleets in the world could have succeeded in carrying out under a rain of fire. In this manœuvre the fleet was supported by two of our torpedo-boat flotillas under Captain Heinrich, which, recognizing the fleet's dangerous position, attacked the main body of the British fleet and drew its whole fire upon themselves. As soon as Admiral Scheer had re-formed his fleet, he swung round again on the enemy, to repeat his attack. The approach of

darkness soon afterward made any deliberate fighting formation impossible. If the English fleet at this stage had felt superior to us, they would have clung to our fleet in all circumstances, for as we had with us a squadron of pre-Dreadnoughts, and their fleet consisted exclusively of new battle vessels, they were superior to us in the general speed of their fleet, in addition to having available a group of battle-ships of especially high speed.

Under these circumstances Admiral Scheer and our whole fleet regarded a renewal of the fight on the following morning as a certainty. They preferred, however, to face this fight at a less distance from the mine-free fairway, and accordingly decided to move thither in the night, and take station close to Horns Reef. When the day broke, the sea lay empty as far as man could see, and nothing was to be found of the British fleet until an airship reported the approach of a new and apparently large body of ships far to the westward. It appeared later that this was in fact the main body of the British fleet, which, however, soon steamed off to the northward. The probable course of movement of the British fleet was that it steamed off to the west at nightfall, passing to the south of our fleet, with the rearguard, consisting of cruisers and a large part of their torpedo boats, following at a somewhat considerable distance. Our fleet on its journey southwards must have struck the gap so existing between their main body and their rearguard. The mass of English torpedo boats, sup-

ported by cruisers, were thus presented with an incredibly favourable opportunity to attack our fleet, which was steaming in close formation in one long line. The attack was carried out with courage, but little skill. It cost us the *Pommern,* a pre-Dreadnought, but several English cruisers and at least six torpedo boats, under the fire of our ships, burst into flames, which shot into the sky high above the masts of the vessels. As a high officer of the fleet staff described it in a letter to me, it was like sailing through an avenue of fire. In addition to the flames, there was the glare of the searchlights and the sparking of the wireless. The main body of the English fleet, which must have been at no great distance, cannot thus have remained in any doubt as to the whereabouts of our fleet.

Fortune did not present such a favourable opportunity to our torpedo boats; they passed the night without finding the British fleet, and their splendid training for such fighting was not brought to bear.

On June 1st, in the afternoon, our fleet arrived back in the river mouths, elated and in a sense surprised by their success and by the clearly proved superiority of their *personnel* and material. Most of the men simply had not known how splendid the fleet was. After this battle, in which conditions had not favoured us and only the armoured cruisers and the leading ships of one squadron of our whole fleet had been able to take any real part, they thought of the success which we could have expected if at the

beginning of the war we had sought for a favourable opportunity and had sent the whole fleet to battle. In spite of our numerical inferiority and the unfavourable conditions, our losses were only a third of the British.

In the course of the year 1916 Admiral Scheer made several further earnest attempts to bring the English fleet to battle. The enemy, however, were quite obviously avoiding a "costly and precipitated action," and the numerical inferiority of our High Seas fleet, and the general conditions, made it too unfavourable for us to fight a battle at Scapa Flow or off Dover.

It is worthy of notice that one advance made by our fleet brought us to within 30 knots of Sunderland, and into touch with the English fleet; we lost sight of it in a heavy rainstorm, and when the weather cleared it was not to be seen.

VIII

With the commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1st, 1917, the navigation of our North Sea waters became more and more seriously harassed by minefields, and the difficulty of keeping the fairways open increased. The continual presence of our heavy vessels for the protection of our minesweepers became more and more essential.

There remained one possible course which, right up to the last, might have changed the whole position once again. This consisted in a complete suspension of the submarine campaign, the withdrawal of the

submarines, and the attempt to employ them in battle in co-operation with the fleet. But once this campaign, which according to all our reports was causing the English great embarrassment, was undertaken, all its effects would have been lost by a pause which would have been bound to cover many weeks, during which substantial period of time the enemy would have full freedom of movement for his merchant ships. We should have had to some extent to start wholly afresh. In addition, the effect of submarines in battle, having regard to the high speed of the fighting ships, was almost entirely a matter of chance; indeed, their real value was rather that they rendered tracts of the sea unsafe, somewhat after the fashion of a movable mine-field, and in the danger created by them for any enemy ships that might be rendered incapable of movement.

I will not discuss here the question whether the introduction of surprises in the way of constant changes in the conduct of the submarine campaign, and the employment of cruisers, would not have succeeded in restricting, or even temporarily or partially preventing, the operation of the enemy's counter measures.

When, however, in October, 1918, by sacrificing the submarine campaign on the demand of Wilson, we abandoned the only weapon which still embarrassed the English, and as a result everyone who possessed any real conception of our enemies, or of the spirit and meaning of the war, expected us to be faced by the most merciless and humiliating armistice condi-

tions, Admiral Scheer decided to employ this last remaining means of utilizing our submarines. He had only a short time previously, under the pressure of events and with the concurrence of Field-Marshal Hindenburg, succeeded in prevailing upon the Emperor and the Chief of the Cabinet to place the entire command of the navy in his hands. A substantial number of submarines sent out in advance of the fleet, and confining their activities to a certain tract of the sea, could always make good our numerical inferiority to a certain extent, and above all could cover the withdrawal of the fleet in the event of defeat. In order to inspire strength into the now generally ebbing line in Flanders by offensive action, an attack was to be made on the eastern mouth of the Channel by our faster ships, in support of which the battle fleet itself, protected by submarines and minefields, was to take up a covering position on the Dutch coast. The possibility of a fleet battle had in the circumstances to be borne in mind. If one should develop, it could be accepted in such a position with favourable prospects, and in the event of success this well-prepared undertaking might turn the fortunes of our people once again into a happier course. But just as the poison of the revolution, for four long years almost encouraged, and at any rate not resisted by the weak rulers of our ancient country, had made its way from home through the lines of communication to the army front, so also had it found its way, without giving any outward sign of its presence, into the navy. At this point

the revolution broke out in the fleet, and our democrats were openly proud to strike out of their country's hand the last weapon that offered salvation.

How badly must a brave people have been led, to have lost their head in this manner! Faithful even in a sorry cause to the duty of obedience which our old country had taught its subjects for their good, Germans now delivered up our magnificent ships to the enemy. May the world judge justly, and remember that the men who under a revolutionary government obeyed the order to deliver up the ships had hitherto performed deeds of heroism whenever they were given the opportunity.

The disappearance of the German navy robbed the other small navies of the world of their life. Their importance and their independence depended on the possibility of a league against English monopoly, a law of world-politics which we have never fully understood. Now, the maintenance of the balance of power at sea depends solely on the American navy, and I have no belief in the reality of the alleged conflicts of interest between the two Anglo-Saxon powers. Their capitalism works in unison for the enslavement of the rest of the world, which since the collapse of the German fleet has no support in the fight for the maintenance of its freedom.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

1. The cause of the declaration of the war zone.—2. The first reverse.—3. *Lusitania* and *Arabic*.—4. To and fro.—5. My resignation.—6. *Sussex*.—7. The unrestricted submarine campaign, 1917.—8. The sum total.

I

THE more England, after the first weeks of the war, kept her fleet back in order to deprive us of the opportunity of achieving a swift decision by force of arms, and to strangle us economically by every means in her power, the more necessary it became for our navy to fight the enemy with similar weapons. The most effective weapon that we possessed against England's commerce was the submarine. If it was to be employed against enemy freight vessels, it was clear from the outset that the existing rules of maritime law, which in the main dated from the days of sailing vessels, did not properly cover the circumstances of the present day. The rules most nearly applicable were those of the old blockade. In the American war of secession, the blockade-runners had been simply shot down by the Federal ships, with cannon it is true, since there were then no torpedoes. Just as the English, in their declaration of the war zone, stated

that it was "in effect a blockade adapted to the conditions of modern warfare and commerce," so could we also without any doubt claim formal justification for a submarine blockade. True, we could expect the neutrals to adopt a different attitude to actions on our part from that which they adopted to similar steps of the English. As a result of the great sea-power, the traditions, and the diplomatic skill of the English, the neutrals submitted to almost anything the English did at sea; but if Germany adopted a corresponding line of conduct, much greater neutral opposition had to be expected. It was clear to the majority of Germans that in a war with England we were strongly "handicapped" from the start.

The main difficulty was to be expected in our relations with America, especially since this country, against the whole spirit of neutrality, had developed shortly after the outbreak of war into an enemy arsenal. Since the bulk of the freight trade of the North Atlantic sails under the British flag, any attack on English trade must of necessity injure the American manufacturers. We had already discovered in connection with our oversea cruisers, which had observed the rules of the old maritime law with the greatest care, that the attitude adopted towards us by the United States was by no means an impartial one.

These considerations led me, with a view to sounding and also to preparing public opinion in the United States, to receive the American journalist von Wie-

gand in November, 1914, and to ask him what America, which had submitted to the absolutely unscrupulous breaches of maritime law by the English, would say if we were to reply with a submarine blockade as we were clearly entitled to do. With the assent of the Foreign Office, the interview was published. It was later alleged that this course betrayed in advance the idea of the submarine campaign, and had unnecessarily irritated the English. Both allegations are unsubstantial and irrelevant. The employment of submarines against English freight vessels had already been discussed in the press in the early stages of the war, and indeed even before the war; and if there ever was any prospect of forcing the British Government to place any limits to their disregard of maritime law it could only be by holding a loaded pistol at their head. No political consequences need to be considered until the pistol was fired.

From the beginning of November onwards, there had been discussions between the leading authorities of the navy as to the possibility of a submarine campaign. On November 7th, 1914, the Chief of the Naval Staff brought forward for discussion a draft of a declaration of the submarine blockade of the whole coast of Great Britain and Ireland. I pointed out that the legal position of a blockade by this new form of vessel in international law had never yet been discussed, and that we ought not to select a date for such a declaration of blockade until such time as we had available a number of submarines

more or less sufficient to maintain it.[1] It seemed to me that it would perhaps be better that the Admiral in command of the Marines in Flanders should declare the blockade, so that the Emperor and the Government should not be committed in the matter. "The blockade of all England," I remarked in concluding my short argument, "looks too much like bluff; blockade of the Thames to start with seems to me better." I thought it would be more correct to start with small beginnings, in order to see how matters developed from both the naval and political point of view. Such a limited declaration would have been more in accord with the means available, and would have accustomed the world gradually to the new idea of blockade. We should have spared America, in particular, not touching the Atlantic passenger vessels, which always sailed to Liverpool, and should thus have lessened the danger from that quarter.

Admiral von Pohl did not share my point of view. On December 15th he laid before me the draft of a letter to the Foreign Office, in which he requested their approval of the opening of a submarine campaign at the end of January, the English Channel and all waters surrounding the United Kingdom to be declared as a war zone.

On December 16th, 1914, I answered this proposal as follows:

[1] On the question whether we could have built more submarines in peace-time, see *Appendix*.

"In reply to Your Excellency's letter of December 15th, I have the honour to state that I would regard the dispatch to the Foreign Office of the request therein enclosed as premature.

"In my view one cannot well ask the Foreign Office at the present time whether there will be political objections in February of next year to so momentous a step as the proposed submarine campaign.

"I have in addition certain objections against the form of conducting the campaign which Your Excellency proposes to adopt. Submarine warfare without a declaration of blockade, as Your Excellency proposes, is in my view much more far-reaching in its effect on materials than a regular legal blockade, and is thus considerably more dangerous politically.

"Our experiences of the war so far have unfortunately made it clear that Germany has to pay more respect to the commercial interests of neutrals than England. The reference to the measures taken by the English, in designating the navigation of the North Sea as dangerous, does not seem to me apt. The English have not merely declared these waters to be dangerous as of their own motion, but only on the ground of their allegation (false, I agree) that we had laid mines there, and that neutral ships were exposed to the danger of being mistaken for German mine-layers, and treated as such.

"Finally, I would expect that certain official quarters in Germany, where objections are already harboured on grounds of international law and morality against a submarine blockade, would object still more to this form of procedure, and make their objections effective. The draft put forward by your Excellency is more likely to increase than to pacify these protests.

"Apart from the above comments, I am wholly of

the view that a systematic attack on a large scale against English trade by means of submarines must be prepared by the navy with the utmost energy and all possible resources. So far as my department is concerned this is already being done."

Admiral von Pohl replied that he could not agree that it was too early for the proposed step. He informed me that, after full and detailed discussions with the Foreign Office, and on the basis of a memorandum of the Permanent Under-Secretary Kriege, it had been decided to keep to the form of a declaration of a war zone, and not to that of a blockade. The Foreign Office was quite ready to justify the new form, and the decision thus turned on considerations of legal doctrine.

At a later stage I recommended that the Chief of the Naval Staff, before conferring with the Chancellor, obtain the concurrence of the Chief of the General Staff, von Falkenhayn, in writing if possible. So far as I know, this advice too was ignored.

On January 27th, 1915, I was invited to a conference with the Chancellor on this question. I explained to him that we could only make progress against England by making her feel the effects of the war, and that in my view we should not be able to avoid adopting submarine warfare in one form or another. I stated that I was not sufficiently *au fait* with the legal and political aspects of the question to make a final decision as to the most suitable form without further information. In this conversation

the Chancellor did not, as a matter of principle, reject the possibility or necessity of a submarine campaign against enemy commerce. In his view, however, political conditions made it impossible to take a decision before the spring or summer of 1915. I was quite agreeable to such a postponement of the matter, as it had not yet been sufficiently worked out. Among other points I thought it right to await the completion of the Flanders submarine fleet and of the dockyard installations there.

On this occasion I stated to Bethmann-Hollweg, in answer to a question on the matter, that one could not of course give an unqualified assurance as to the effectiveness of the submarine from the naval point of view, having regard to the novelty of the weapon, but that I was convinced that we should produce very considerable results and that the danger threatening merchant vessels would deter many of them from venturing to sea.

After these proceedings my surprise can be imagined when, on February 4th, 1915, only a few days after this conversation, Admiral von Pohl in concurrence with the Chancellor submitted to the Emperor in Wilhelmshaven the war-zone and submarine declaration. This document proclaimed the waters round Great Britain and Ireland, including the Channel, as a war zone, and announced that every enemy merchantman found in that area would be destroyed, without it being in every case possible to avoid danger to the crew and passengers. Neutral ships, also, would

be in danger if they navigated the proclaimed area, since owing to the misuse of neutral flags ordered by the British Government it would be inevitable that neutrals should in fact suffer from attacks intended for enemy ships. For neutral vessels the waters to the north of the Shetlands and a strip along the Dutch coast were left free. The difference between this declaration and my proposal is easily seen. I wanted a blockade of the Thames only in the first instance. A blockade is effective when every ship passing through the zone is in substantial danger of capture or destruction. If we had concentrated on the Thames, in order to achieve an absolute stopping of all traffic there, neutral or otherwise, the rest of the coast would have remained free, and no serious inconvenience would have been caused for the time being to neutrals. The Naval Staff was engaged in working out my proposal of a Thames blockade when Pohl, on January 31st, in reliance on the Chancellor, put a stop to the work. By its extension to the whole coast, the scheme was rendered less effective, of ambiguous legality, and more exacting. The declaration was not effective, and lacked substance, thus encouraging objections. It injured the credit of our own declarations, and thus in a sense damaged the prestige of the German navy. It had the appearance of bluff, and the ambiguity arising from our obvious efforts to spare neutrals, coupled with our threats not to spare them, raised doubts as to our right to carry on this mode of warfare. But, apart from legal considera-

tions, the declaration was, both navally and politically, ill-conceived. I never learnt what reason there was for ignoring my view and beginning the submarine campaign, but in any case this constituted one more instance in which—and this time in one of the most important questions with which my department was concerned—I was not consulted at all, the campaign being started over my head and against my will, and that in a form which did not promise success.[1]

The Emperor agreed. I happened to be present, but the only modification I could procure was that reference should be made in the declaration to the misuse of flags by the English.

[1] A communication of February 2nd from the Naval Staff to the Admiralty, which arrived on the 3rd, announced that the Chancellor had approved the war-zone declaration, and enclosed a copy of the proposed declaration. I did not hear of this, as I left Berlin for Wilhelmshaven on the morning of the 3rd. As, by the Cabinet order of July 30th, 1914, decisions of this sort could not be taken without my being consulted, the fault lay in the fact that a decision of such great moment was taken without waiting to hear my views. Such a step should have been fully worked out before being finally settled. Admiral Bachmann writes to me, with regard to his advice in these events: "I expressed unreservedly to Admiral von Pohl my objections to so early an introduction of submarine warfare on February 2nd, 1915, when I was called to Berlin to learn that I was to become Chief of the Naval Staff. My objections, based on the small number of our submarines, the lack of bases in Flanders or elsewhere, inexperience of submarine warfare against merchant ships, etc., were all rejected by the Admiral, who stated that the matter was already decided, that the Chancellor, the Foreign Office, and the General Staff had approved, and that the Emperor's ratification was to be granted immediately. When I entered on my new office on February 6th, the war-zone declaration was already published, with the signatures of Bethmann and Pohl."

I learnt later that this decision, so important in the history of the world, was in fact arrived at during a meeting at the Chancellor's, with the approval of the Foreign Office, in the presence of the Imperial Ministry of the Interior, and apparently without any objection on the part of the General Staff. After that meeting, late in the evening of the same day, and shortly before Pohl's departure for Wilhelmshaven, the international law expert of the Foreign Office, the Permanent Under-Secretary Kriege, on the Chancellor's instructions, forced upon the reluctant Chief of the Naval Staff yet another alteration in the draft of the declaration. I only mention this to show the close co-operation of the departments concerned, and the full agreement of the Chancellor with the course followed by the Naval Staff. On March 8th, 1915, Admiral von Müller wrote as follows on the subject:

"The Secretary of State and myself disapproved the manner in which the submrine campaign against merchantmen was introduced. The time was ill-chosen, the means insufficiently prepared, and the wording of the notification characterized by the greatest clumsiness. Pohl obtained the concurrence of the Chancellor, who was still very ill-informed on the technicalities of the matter, and then took the Emperor by storm, with the already settled draft of the declaration, on February 4th, on the boat journey through the harbour of Wilhelmshaven to the *Seydlitz*. It was a disloyal act on Pohl's part not to have discussed the draft beforehand with the Secretary of State. It was disloyal to me too, for he had previously invariably sought my advice in all important

decisions. He was anxious at all costs to get the declaration published in his own name, and February 4th was certainly the very last day on which this was possible, for on that very day he had taken over the command of the High Sea fleet, and strictly speaking was no longer Chief of the Naval Staff."

The die was cast. On February 18th, 1915, submarine warfare was to begin, threatening, in accordance with the decision taken by Bethmann in opposition to my advice, the destruction of every ship bound for England or Ireland.

II

The declaration was in my view premature and unhappy, but once it had been solemnly published, and that with something of a flourish of trumpets, it was vital to hold fast to it, if the dignity and thus the power of the Empire were not to receive a severe injury and the confidence of the enemy were not to be fatally raised.

On February 12th the Americans dispatched their first note against the submarine campaign, which can hardly have been unexpected by the responsible officials. Nevertheless, from this day forth, to Pohl's astonishment, the attitude of the Foreign Office changed. Its representative at General Headquarters, Treutler, stated that Pohl had misunderstood the Chancellor, but Pohl categorically denied that any misunderstanding had been possible, as he had explained the whole matter thoroughly to the Chancellor.

Thus, before the campaign born on February 4th had drawn its first breath, its own parents were hurrying panic-stricken to throttle it.

In my view we might possibly have considered the abandonment of the submarine campaign if England had made corresponding concessions in the realm of maritime law. The civil departments thought that a sufficient concession on England's part would have been to take her stand on the Declaration of London. I certainly thought it possible that England would change her course to this extent, if she regarded the dangers of the submarine campaign as greater than the advantages she reaped from ignoring the Declaration of London. We might have been well content with this, for although the Declaration of London would not offer any really decisive relaxation of the naval blockade of Germany, the English would at any rate, by adopting it in the circumstances, suffer a severe loss of prestige, while we, although having to abandon the campaign for the time, would at least have gained something by its introduction.

The Chancellor, in drafting the answer to the American note, did not wait for the concurrence either of the Chief of the Naval Staff or of myself, but on the contrary, with the aid of the Naval Cabinet, refused von Falkenhayn's demand for our co-operation, and sent the draft directly to the Emperor, who was then at Lötzen. The newly appointed Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Bachmann, entered a protest to the Emperor on February 14th against this course of

procedure, as also against the contents of the draft itself, which was calculated to betray to the enemy in the most dangerous fashion the vacillating nature of our policy.

On the evening of February 15th the Chief of the Naval Staff quite unexpectedly received from the Emperor the order not to begin the campaign as announced on February 18th, but to await a special order for its introduction, and on the same day, February 15th, the submarine commanders were instructed to spare neutral vessels in the barred zone. At the same time a telegram arrived at General Headquarters from the Chief of the Cabinet, to the effect that the Emperor required an immediate telegraphic answer whether, and to what extent, it could be guaranteed that England would be forced to modify her attitude within six weeks of the opening of the campaign. My own attitude was to be mentioned in the answer.

The kernel of our altogether too humble answer to America, which was dispatched on February 17th, lay in the invitation to the American Government to find a way to procure the observation of the Declaration of London by the English, with the suggestion that in that case the German Government would be ready to follow out the logical results of the new situation thus created. That meant of course that in that case we would abandon the use of submarines not merely in the barred zone, but also against enemy vessels. I was by no means opposed in principle to

the point of view that our aim should be to force the English to observe the Declaration of London; and the following telegram was accordingly dispatched to Lötzen: "Secretary of State and Chief of Naval Staff are convinced that England will modify attitude within six weeks of opening of new campaign if all available forces be energetically employed from start." We had puzzled for hours over the telegram of the Chief of the Cabinet and the answer to be returned to it. We arrived at the conviction that the question as to the six weeks was designed to force us to answer in the negative, with a view to the use of our opinion to justify a surrender to the Americans. I still remember Admiral von Capelle's remark: "A silly question deserves a silly answer." It was unreasonable and contrary to all principles of warfare to attempt to pin us to such a limited period; and on the other hand it was in fact reasonable to suppose that the great effects, at that time limited by no counter-measures, of even a relatively small number of submarines would force England to yield and to observe the Declaration of London. This was the first of those unhappy attempts to fix limits for the performance of warlike operations which were so frequent and so dangerous in later stages of the war. I always regarded such attempts as altogether wrong, but both now and later the navy was forced to submit to it.

It was of course not impossible that England might arrogantly despise the submarine weapon and remain obstinate. In that case we should have had to continue

the campaign on its full scale, and that solution would have been the one most in accordance with our own interest. It was, however, in any event quite clear that there could be little hope of effective results for the campaign in the form in which it was in fact opened on February 18th—that is to say, on the footing that no neutral ships were to be sunk; for the English ships naturally began to sail regularly under neutral flags, as indeed they had to our sure knowledge already largely done. The misuse of neutral flags, which was recommended by the British Admiralty to their merchantmen, thus became very effective. Many brave submarine crews were the victims of these directions; the *Baralong* murder will be remembered in this connection.

We left the war-zone declaration standing, thus retaining the shell of the campaign, which had angered the Americans, in order to give an appearance of firmness for the benefit of German public opinion; but at the same time we removed the kernel by means of the modified orders which were given to the submarine commanders, at the instance of the civil authorities; we acted, in a word, *fortiter in modo* and *suaviter in re*. The submarine warfare now became, as Bachmann had prophesied, of no effect in securing the ultimate victory of the German people, but still had material enough to create incidents and quarrels with the Americans.

As I have stated, although Admiral Bachmann and myself regarded the declaration as premature in time

and unfortunate in form, we were both of the view that, once it had been announced to the world, it must be stood by at all costs.

If we had returned to the first American Note a polite but definite refusal, I am convinced that there would not have been, either then or later, a declaration of war or even a rupture of relations. The Americans had not then become so embittered and partisan; they still respected us, and were not so involved in their loans to the Entente. The sensitive respect of their citizens for maritime law even found the unneutral attitude of the States disquieting. The pacifist Bryan was still Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It would have been quite impossible for Wilson at that time to make the country hostile to us. In this lay our great opportunity. For the negotiations then being carried on by Prince Bülow to secure the neutrality of Italy, also, our embassy at Rome expressed by telegraph the desire for "unwavering maintenance of our attitude and of respect for the might of Germany and the Germant fleet." It is essential from the start to carry on a strong diplomatic campaign by means of notes against the unneutral attitude of the United States; we ought to have made protest after protest against the supply of arms and munitions, the manipulation to our prejudice of the wireless telegraph service, the silent acquiescence in the illegal English blockade, the measures taken against our overseas cruisers and against neutral mails, etc. Such a policy against America would not be

dangerous, for we were after all not compelled to add an ultimatum at the foot of a sharp protest. Even if we had not prevented the Anglo-American "mutual guarantee association" which grew up during the war, it would probably have been rendered less dangerous. We should have given a definite cry to which all the elements in the United States which were working against Wilson could have rallied: the Germans, the Irish, the Quakers, the cotton interests. We never adopted the right tone in dealing with the Americans. When we said: "You Americans are in form quite correct in supplying munitions and so forth to our enemies, but it is not nice of you," the effect was, as results have shown, exactly the opposite of what we desired, apart altogether from the fact that the transformation of America into an enemy arsenal was in the circumstances the most outrageous breach of neutrality imaginable. As between Germany and America there was even a direct precedent on the point; during the Spanish-American war, on the suggestion of the American ambassador, Andrew White, we held back in Kuxhaven a vessel laden with arms bound for Cuba.

Had we dealt with the submarine campaign coolly and consistently, we should have prepared the ground for the view that the campaign was not merely justifiable as a reprisal against the starvation blockade (which, unfortunately, was the only argument put forward on our behalf), but that it was clearly and irrefutably justified by the maritime law created by

the English themselves at the beginning of the war. The new weapon could not be bound by rules made in the old sailing days of a century ago, but had a right to new law. Does anyone seriously believe that in any future war a people fighting for its life will not use the submarine as we have used it in this war, even if new rules of international law forbid them so to do?

We ought to have recognized at the latest in February, 1915, that there were elements of blackmail in Wilson's policy. In our earnest efforts to spare neutral ships, we had offered to permit the Americans to send their vessels through the barred zone, if they were made unquestionably recognizable as neutral (through convoys). America had not sufficient goodwill to agree to this. When English submarines torpedoed our merchant ships in the Baltic, even in Swedish territorial waters, or in the Adriatic, thus doing exactly what we did, and worse, nobody was in the least agitated. In America, the awful catalogue of England's reckless breaches of international law lay closed and unread, while everyone pored over the page of the German submarine campaign. The weakness of our politicians, which was bound to give the impression of a bad conscience, was largely the cause of this unjust attitude of the world. Repeatedly, but in vain, I pointed out to the Chancellor the true character of Wilson's policy, begging him to modify his attitude accordingly. We, however, evacuated one just standpoint of principle after another, only suc-

ceeding thereby in encouraging Wilson to further claims and further threats. Demands which in the first years of the war we could have rejected calmly and firmly without fear of a breach hardened more and more into questions of prestige. While our credit suffered immeasurable damage with all maritime nations, who must have thought that our own hopes of victory were shaken, we were screwing Wilson more and more up to a standpoint the maintenance of which in the end became a question of honour for him. Of the practical advantages which were eagerly promised as a reward for a compliant attitude by Bethmann, Helfferich, Count Bernstorff, and others, we never reaped a single one. America never made us any really tangible concession. In our capacity for self-illusion we got along without that. And as our prestige and the neutral belief in our victory declined, the only real avenue to success, a change in our political relation to Japan and Russia, became more and more difficult.

III

On May 7th, 1915, the *Lusitania,* an English passenger vessel, which at the same time figured as an auxiliary cruiser in the British Navy List, was torpedoed. American citizens who in wanton recklessness, and in spite of the warnings of our ambassador, had embarked in this armed cruiser, heavily laden with munitions, lost their lives in the sinking of the vessel. It may be mentioned that the commander of the sub-

marine which torpedoed the *Lusitania* did not know that it was the *Lusitania* until it turned on its side in sinking. He attacked the ship from forward, so that he could not at first count the masts or funnels. After the torpedo had hit the vessel, there was a second explosion in the interior of the vessel, due to the quantities of munitions on board. It was this circumstance alone that led to the immediate sinking of the vessel, and the high loss of life. I was at the time in Berlin, and on May 9th telegraphed to General Headquarters that it was now urgently necessary to make good our legal position, and that compromise was more dangerous than firmness. One could regret the loss of life, but must insist on our clear rights. Our prestige would then be increased in America, and the danger of war thus most effectively diminished. On May 12th I had an answer from the Chief of the Cabinet to the effect that the Emperor agreed with my point of view. On May 15th we received the first American *Lusitania* Note, which demanded an expression of our disapproval of the torpedoing, and an indemnity. Our answer temporized. Weeks of discussion between the various departments of the Government followed. On May 31st there was a general meeting at Pless to discuss the question, the Emperor presiding. Admiral von Müller informed Admiral Bachmann and myself immediately he arrived that the Chancellor refused to be responsible for the campaign in its existing form. Von Treutler and General von Falkenhayn were of the same opinion as the Chancel-

lor. The Chief of the Naval Staff and myself on the contrary maintained the view that it was technically impossible to comply with the Chancellor's demand that the campaign should be so conducted as to avoid any political conflict, and that His Majesty would accordingly have to decide whether it was to be carried on at all or not. The Emperor agreed with our point of view and said that if the Chancellor would not accept the responsibility for the entire abandonment of the campaign, the existing orders must stand. The result of the discussion was accordingly the issue of an order to the submarine commanders containing renewed and comprehensive instructions as to sparing neutral vessels (which had already been the subject of an earlier order), leaving untouched on the other hand the instructions for the sinking of all English vessels, without any exception.

However, soon after, on June 2nd, the Chancellor wrote requesting the Chief of the Naval Staff to have large enemy passenger vessels spared. There had been no suggestion of this in the discussion of May 31st. Admiral Bachmann put forward his objections, but the Chancellor rejected them. Von Bethmann thereupon, without our concurrence, appealed to the Emperor for a new decision as to what after all was the technical conduct of the campaign. On June 5th, in accordance with this appeal, a new order of the Emperor was given out that passenger vessels, even enemy vessels, were not to be sunk. No attention was paid to a telegram shortly setting out our objections,

which the Chief of Staff and myself at the last moment dispatched to the Emperor.

The Chancellor had not the strength of mind to decide on the complete abandonment of the campaign, as he wanted to keep up the appearance of maintaining it, in order to save his face before public opinion at home. In practice, however, after this order, it was impossible to attack large vessels, as it was in virtually every case impossible for the submarine commanders to distinguish between passenger and cargo vessels. Both Admiral Bachmann and myself tendered our resignations on account of the course adopted by the Chancellor, but they were refused, in my case in a most ungracious manner.

On June 2nd our Ambassador in Washington reported that Wilson had stated to him in an audience that he was aiming at the complete elimination of the submarine campaign. We ought, he suggested, to make by its abandonment an appeal to general political morality, since the war could not be finally decided by force of arms, but only by an understanding on this point. Count Bernstorff recommended urgently that we should agree to this, stating that there was some prospect that in that case the export of munitions would be prohibited, whereas otherwise there was the possibility of a rupture of diplomatic relations and a tremendous increase in the supply of munitions. In my view the Ambassador was overlooking the fact that the American munitions industry would in any event extend to the utmost of its power,

and that it was simply utopian to hope that America would specially prohibit the export of munitions.

At the beginning of June the Foreign Office at last dispatched its answer to the American demands on the *Lusitania*. This brought about a further American Note, which was certainly unfriendly and contentious, but was so framed as not to make an answer formally necessary. The matter was thus settled for the time being. We continued the campaign in a form in which it could not live and at the same time could not die.

A large number of men of my acquaintance, who were intimately acquainted with American conditions, expressed the firm opinion that the policy of our Notes was fundamentally wrong as a method of dealing with Wilson and the men who stood behind him. Even those who in the main used all their influence to bring about an early understanding with England and America did not agree with the legal-bureaucratic tone adopted by the Foreign Office on every occasion. Thus, Ballin wrote on August 1st, 1915, dealing with our Note of reply as follows:

"Once again, in connection with the further treatment of this American question, I find myself in complete opposition to the views of the Wilhelmstrasse. The last Note should have been answered immediately, that is to say within twenty-four hours; and it was so easy to answer. One need only have said: 'The Imperial Government expresses its lively sense of regret on learning from the Note which your Excellency has had the goodness, on the instructions of your Government, to hand to me, that the Government of the United

States of North America is not prepared to recognize the exceedingly accommodating spirit displayed by the Imperial German Government in its last Note of reply. Under these circumstances the Imperial German Government can but express the wish that citizens of the United States will be suitably warned by their Government against embarking upon ships of enemy flag which propose to pass through the war zone declared by the German Government.'

"As I have mentioned, a short answer of this sort should in my view have been given to Mr. Gerard within twenty-four hours. Another fortnight's brooding gives the Americans the impression that our responsible persons are at a loss what to do. One knows that Washington conducts its politics in its shirt sleeves, and American questions of this sort should be handled in a manner adjusted to American psychology."

Those are the views of Berlin, but I would like also to quote a representative of the opposite point of view. On August 5th, 1915, Secretary Helfferich wrote to the Chancellor urging that the submarine campaign should be still further restricted for a few weeks, or under certain circumstances even for three months. He believed that the American Government had extended a definite invitation to us to co-operate with them in securing the freedom of the seas, and he accordingly hoped that if we yielded to their Note we should be able to establish a common Americo-German front against England. The cotton planters would exercise so strong a pressure on Wilson that the German textile industry could be preserved from shutting

down and starving. If we were to offer Wilson this "good chance" to stand up for his ideals, he could not help taking it. Germany ought, thought Helfferich, to dispose of her enemies separately, like the last of the three Horatii who in the story defeated the three Curiatii who were attacking him, separating them by a clever retreat; the German Government could no more be accused of weakness in adopting such conduct than could the ancient Roman. Helfferich thus took for granted that loss of prestige counted for nothing, and that the world-powers of to-day would be as foolish as the three Curiatii.

I imagine that Ballin knew better than Bethmann or Helfferich how to treat the Americans. In any case, we gave up after the *Arabic* case a great deal more than Helfferich proposed, without getting a single bale of cotton. Besides, we had already, at the time of the first exchange of Notes in February, 1915, given Wilson an opportunity to establish just the sort of community of interests that we, with our illimitable capacity for self-deception, went on expecting year after year; and this although, even if we succeeded wholly, the Declaration of London, that alpha and omega of our jurists in the Foreign Office, would not have brought us any decisive advantages.

Secretary von Jagow stated to the Reichstag Committee on August 15th that we would not allow our submarine policy to be influenced by America. As soon, however, as the Reichstag had substantially finished its session—it actually rose on August 27th—

the Chancellor, supported by Falkenhayn and Admiral von Müller, set to work with all his strength to have the campaign stopped. The sinking of the English steamer *Arabic* was used as the ground for this step, although there had up to then been no report at all from the submarine and no complaint from the Americans. As von Treutler stated in the later audience of His Majesty, it was not a question of the *Arabic* case itself, but of a final understanding with America.

In the face of his promise to me of August 7th, the Chancellor took Admiral Bachmann and myself by surprise with the decision. The navy was to be presented with a *fait accompli.* I was called to Pless by telegram shortly before the departure of the night train, to attend an audience on the following morning. I was only able to get into touch with Admiral Bachmann on the short stretch from Kattowitz to Pless. Arriving there on August 26th, we had at once a brief discussion with the Chancellor. He described the position as very grave, basing himself on a report from our Naval Attaché at Washington and a statement of Ambassador Gerard. He, the Chancellor, could not stay for ever on the top of a volcano. A telegram was to be sent to the Ambassador at Washington, that the submarine commanders had definite orders not to torpedo passenger steamers without warning, and without opportunity being given for the rescue of passengers and crews. The question of a *Lusitania* indemnity was to be submitted to arbitration, and we were further to request the United States

to bring England to observe the Declaration of London. I said that the Chancellor plainly over-estimated the importance of the Declaration of London, and that an arbitration over the *Lusitania* case would be quite certain to result unfavourably for us, as there were so far no international rules about submarines.

We came to no agreement at this discussion, and the audience of the Emperor followed immediately, being cut somewhat short by the fact that, through the open door of the adjoining room, breakfast could be seen waiting on a table. I emphasized the view that in any event we were bound to await a report of the sinking of the *Arabic* from the commander of the submarine before any decision could be taken. If it was absolutely necessary to avoid misunderstandings with America for the time, we could withdraw the submarines entirely from English waters for a certain period, and send them to the Mediterranean, as I had mentioned to the Chancellor in a conference on August 7th. For the rest, I thought that a sufficient Note could be drawn up to America without abandoning the principle of submarine warfare. Bachmann, who had had favourable reports as to feeling in America, pointed out in the general audience of the Emperor that a public declaration such as the Chancellor desired was unnecessary, since instructions to submarines to spare passenger vessels had in fact been in force since the beginning of June, having been kept secret merely because they were not consistent with the statements in our Notes in reply to the Americans.

If the declaration were now publicly made, we should be admitting the correctness of the enemy contention that the submarine campaign was unlawful. If anything at all need be said, it would be sufficient to state that measures—what measures was a matter for us alone—were being taken to preserve passenger vessels. A too hasty abandonment of the campaign—to which the declaration desired by the Chancellor would amount—would be taken as a sign of weakness and would have an unfavourable effect on home and neutral opinion. In spite of the opposition of the Chancellor and of von Treutler, the representative of the Foreign Office, the Emperor decided in favour of the proposal of the naval representative, that the cable should not be sent to the Ambassador in Washington. He ordered that the Chancellor, the Chief of the Naval Staff, and myself should prepare and submit to him a draft of a declaration which could be dispatched to the United States if it should become necessary.

On the next day, August 27th, the Chancellor, in spite of this clear settlement, obtained a new decision from the Emperor in the direction desired by him, without giving any notice whatever to the Chief of the Naval Staff or to myself. We were informed of this last decision by word of mouth, on the afternoon of the same day, by von Treutler, who added that a cable to that effect had already been dispatched to the Ambassador at Washington. To hasten this decision, it was said, another telegram had just arrived, at the psychological moment, from the Pope, urging us

to adopt this attitude. "Now they are eating out of our hand," remarked Gerard on August 27th; he obviously had a poor opinion of our diplomats, and knew that America could do what she liked with them.

Already on August 27th there were articles in English and American newspapers on the lines of "Exit Tirpitz." This information had thus been allowed to pass by the German censorship, that is to say by the Foreign Office, actually before the Emperor had given his decision. Thus was the submarine campaign stopped for the time, amid resounding cries of triumph from America and our enemies. Germany had lost heavily in prestige. The neutral world was full of Germany's surrender, while the position of Wilson everywhere, and especially in America, became very high.

On the ground of this conduct of the Chancellor in taking me by surprise, I requested His Majesty on August 27th to release me from my position as Secretary of State, placing myself at his disposal for any other employment as a naval officer. On August 30th my request was refused.

"On the other hand," so ran the Cabinet order, "we have in this and in many previous instances gained the conviction that co-operation between yourself and the Chancellor is impossible in naval questions touching on the domain of foreign politics, and this includes almost every question relating to the conduct of the war at sea." (Accordingly, my regular advisory activities in this connection were to cease.) "We refuse, however, most decidely to release you from your position as Secretary of State for Naval

Affairs. You cannot ignore not only that a change in this office during the war—especially in the present position of the *personnel* at the Admiralty—would have serious disadvantages for the work of the whole navy, but that your departure from office at the present moment would involve the most regrettable results at home and abroad, which it is Our sacred duty to avoid. Further, We cannot permit an officer to ask for his release during the war on the ground of differences of opinion on questions of the employment of Our fighting vessels, for these are questions which in the last resort have to be decided by Us as supreme war lord, in the full consciousness of Our responsibility."

On my stating that the contents of this order made it impossible for me to remain in office, the Emperor granted me a short private audience, and I was promised a modified order. Accordingly, on September 19th, 1915, I received the Imperial assurance that it was His Majesty's full intention "to take my opinion on all important questions of naval policy"; and I thereupon resolved not to insist on my release. A large number of politicians and persons of very high position had urged me to this resolve.

Admiral Bachmann, however, who had protested against the Emperor being thus taken by storm by the Chancellor, was relieved, being replaced by Admiral von Holtzendorff, who had been placed on half pay after the naval manœuvres of 1912. Prior to his appointment he had on several occasions expressed himself in favour of the views of von Bethmann. He was instructed to take up his regular residence not

at General Headquarters, but in Berlin, a course which circumstances at that time also prescribed for myself.

IV

It will be useful to examine the development of the submarine campaign from the point of view of the fleet command, which was entrusted with the control of the campaign except in the Mediterranean, Flanders, and the Baltic. The then Chief of Staff of the Fleet has given me the following tabular statement on the matter:

"*February 4th,* 1915.—Declaration of war zone.

"*February 14th,* 1915.—Request, on urgent political grounds, to send orders by wireless to the submarines sent out, not for the present to attack ships sailing under neutral flag. (In the then state of submarine wireless, the request could not be complied with, as the boats were already far off. Besides, every ship at that time sailed under neutral flag.)

"*February 15th,* 1915.—Order from General Headquarters, that submarine and trade campaign against neutrals was not to begin on February 18th, but only on receipt of special order. As a result of this order, the next batch of boats to be held back, thus causing a pause.

"*February 18th,* 1915.—A belt between Lindesnaes and the Tyne is to be kept free for Danish and Swedish vessels, in which there is to be no mining or sinking.

"*February 20th,* 1915.—Order to open campaign in North Sea and English Channel. American and

Italian flags to be spared even here. A free safe belt is provided for Scandinavians to sail to England.

"*February 22nd,* 1915.—Order to open campaign on west coast of United Kingdom. Especial care recommended to spare American and Italian flags.

"*March 7th,* 1915.—The free belt for Scandinavians is abolished, but is not to be mined; it is thus really hardly endangered.

"*March 30th,* 1915.—The free belt is wholly abolished.

"*April 2nd,* 1915.—After loss of several submarines through traps, order that safety of our own boats is to come before all other considerations. No longer essential to rise to surface.

"*April 4th,* 1915.—New warning as to sparing neutrals.

"*April 24th,* 1915.—Ditto.

"*May 7th,* 1915.—*Lusitania* case. Regarded as great success in the fleet. An English, that is to say, an enemy steamer, not within any of the existing limitations, and armed into the bargain. Commander called to General Headquarters and treated very ungraciously by Chief of Cabinet.

"*June 6th,* 1915.—Orders to attack no large passenger steamers, not even enemy.

"*June 26th,* 1915.—Chief of Fleet Staff writes to Naval Staff: 'In my view, which is shared by the whole navy, we should yield no ground in connection with the submarine campaign, for the following reasons:

"'(1) Any surrender from the position taken up in the declaration of war zone must be regarded as a political defeat.

"'(2) The intention of that declaration was not

the destruction of certain ships, but an attack on the import and export trade of England. Sparing neutrals or compensating them for the sinking of their vessels actually encourages sailings to England under neutral flag.

"'(3) Any yielding gives assistance to the enemy arguments that the proposed method of warfare is barbarous.

"'(4) Only the energetic conduct of the campaign can turn the insular position of England from advantage to a disadvantage. Is also of tremendous importance for the future development of Germany. To yield is to sacrifice the whole effect of submarines against England.'

"The Chief of Fleet Staff requests permission to support his arguments in person to the political authorities, since he has undertaken responsibility from the start for the campaign. The personal attendance of the Chief of Fleet Staff is not permitted, but instead the chief of the submarines and one submarine commander are ordered to attend the Chancellor to give information.

"*August 19th,* 1915.—*Arabic* case. Count Bernstorff states in America that the commander is to be punished. (Submarine commanders again instructed to observe the restrictions laid down.)

"*August 27th,* 1915.—Orders not to send out further submarines for trade war until the position is cleared up.

"*August 30th,* 1915.—Orders that until further notice no small passenger steamers are to be sunk without warning and rescue of crew.

"*September 1st,* 1915.—Chief of Fleet Staff telegraphs to Chief of Cabinet for submission to His Majesty, that this order can only be carried out at

the utmost danger to submarines, for which he cannot be responsible; accordingly asks permission to resign. Answer from Chief of Cabinet, that His Majesty forbids Chief of Fleet Staff to question His Majesty's commands.

"*September* 18*th,* 1915.—General position necessitates that for the next few weeks all risk should be avoided of breaches of regulations laid down for campaign. Order accordingly to suspend all submarine activities of any sort on west coast and in Channel, and to carry on in North Sea only in accordance with Prize Order. Practically complete cessation of all employment of submarines."

Such are the impressions from the fleet. Order, Counter-order, Disorder!

When one reviews these commands and counter-commands, which in part were quite impossible to carry out, and when one remembers further that they had to pass through the different commands to the individual commanders, one can well understand what confusion and irritation must have been caused to the commanders by this perpetual and often self-contradictory interference of the political authorities and the Cabinet. On the one hand their own strength and energy, the views of their fellows, and no doubt also of their immediate superior, all called aloud for effective action; and on the other hand punishment and court martial awaited these brave men if they misunderstood these ambiguous orders or caused any political difficulties.

How differently has England dealt with similar cases of sea fighting! For centuries the principle has held good there that any action on the part of a British officer, so long as it be energetic, will be protected against outside consequences.

V

In December, 1915, the Austrian Government, which in the *Ancona* case had scored a remarkable and well-founded prestige victory over Wilson, was forced by the German Office to say "Father, I have sinned"; however, about the same time the point of view of the German Army command in relation to the submarine campaign underwent a certain change. The fighting fronts had stiffened, and a decision of the war had become still more difficult to achieve. It was probably under the impression produced by these circumstances that the army command requested a conference on the question of the submarine campaign, which was held at the Ministry of War on December 30th, 1915, and January 5th, 1916. General von Falkenhayn stated that now that Bulgaria had come in on our side, he was ready to accept unrestricted submarine warfare, if the navy guaranteed success. He stated that his reason for supporting the Chancellor in his opposition to the campaign in the autumn of 1915 was that he feared, on the strength of statements of the Foreign Office, that Bulgaria might be led by such a campaign to refrain from joining us. Communications from Enver, and remarks of Radoslavov

and of Ambassador von Wangenheim, however, contradict this assumption of the Foreign Office most emphatically.[1]

At the meeting at the Ministry of War I explained that the campaign was both possible and practicable. In place of the former declaration of war zone, I recommended a sort of embargo on commercial traffic to and from England. Admiral von Holtzendorff described the opening of such a campaign as the salvation of the navy, but recommended that it should not be begun until March 1st. Falkenhayn, Holtzendorff, the Minister for War, Wild von Hohenborn, and myself were entirely at one, both as to the opening of the campaign, and as to the date of opening.

Holtzendorff's oral statement of his views in favour of the campaign was confirmed by a memorandum of the naval staff of January 7th, which stated that if all the restrictions were removed it could be confidently assumed, on the strength of our earlier experience, that the English resistance would be broken in at most six months. The memorandum recognized the danger from America, but explained that, if we could not secure a favourable decision of the war by October, 1916, all hope would be lost of a peace that would render possible for Germany in the coming generation reasonable security of existence and chances

[1] A Dutch press report in the second half of August, 1915, stated that Bulgaria had hesitated to ally herself with us when she saw how we kow-towed to America and England after the *Arabic* case.

of economic development. A further memorandum of the naval staff, of February 12th, 1916, which was to the same effect, was submitted to a large number of economic experts, who all expressed their agreement with it, and in general described the immediate opening of unrestricted submarine operations as the last and only chance for Germany.

I, too, in February, 1916, sent a memorandum to the Chief of the General Staff, dealing with the necessity and practicability of the submarine campaign.[1]

Captain Widenmann on my behalf had an exhaustive discussion with Falkenhayn at General Headquarters, on February 11th and 12th, on the subject of this memorandum and of the submarine question in general. The effect of Falkenhayn's remarks was roughly: "We all agree that England will fight to a decision. The decision turns on the possession of Belgium. If we restore it, we are lost. I have made up my mind in favour of the campaign, and I count definitely on it being carried out. I will work for it with all my strength, and secure that it is decided on."

In complete contradiction to the Chancellor's views, I was then already absolutely convinced that any further delay in beginning the campaign involved the greatest danger, and I concluded the above-mentioned memorandum with the following remarks, which unfortunately for Germany have been subsequently proved correct:

[1] A similar memorandum was first sent to the Chancellor.

"Immediate and relentless recourse to the submarine weapon is absolutely necessary. Any further delay in the introduction of unrestricted warfare will give England time for further naval and economic defensive measures, cause us greater losses in the end, and endanger quick success. The sooner the campaign be opened, the sooner will success be realized, and the more rapidly and energetically will England's hope of defeating us by a war of exhaustion be destroyed. If we defeat England, we break the backbone of the hostile coalition."

A large number of public bodies and individuals approached the Chancellor at this time to urge upon him the adoption of the campaign. Among these was Hugo Stinnes, whose letter to the Chancellor is worthy of notice; according to reliable information it counts for as much in Sweden as my memorandum. These representations of politicians and other persons in important positions were in no way due to any initiative of mine.

On February 23rd I chanced to have the opportunity in Wilhelmshaven to say to the Emperor how happy I had been to learn that there were prospects of a real campaign against English freight space. I mentioned that freight space constituted the decisive question of the whole war, and that it permitted no delay. The fight was a fight for life for Germany. The small neutrals presented no real danger. The Emperor must come to a decision.

The decisive audience took place on March 6th, 1916, and that without my being summoned, in spite

of the above-mentioned modified order. I heard unofficially that the audience was to be held and had the question asked of Admiral von Müller whether the Emperor desired my attendance. The Admiral answered: "No, His Majesty has not commanded the presence of the Secretary of State." The Chancellor, Falkenhayn, and Holtzendorff were present. Against Falkenhayn's advice, the campaign was postponed indefinitely. On March 8th I reported sick, and immediately received the request, sent over by telegraph, to hand in my resignation. I thereupon dispatched the following request:

"BERLIN,
"*March 12th,* 1916.

"I have served Your Majesty with all my strength in the advancement of Your Majesty's life-work of showing to the German people the way across the sea and into the world.

"In the decisive fight against the enemies who seek to bar us by the sword from this path of national development, Your Majesty has not been able to follow my advice.

"In the most recent and most vital decisions as to the employment of our naval forces, I have not been able to exercise the influence which Your Majesty has repeatedly been so gracious as to assure me that I possess.

"I find myself unable any further properly to act as the representative of Your Majesty's Government before the German people in naval questions. My great grief at seeing the life-work of Your Majesty and the future of Germany as a nation moving to its destruction along the path that has been chosen makes

it clear to me that my services can no longer be of use to Your Majesty's Government.

"Your Majesty found yourself unable to grant my previous request to be relieved of my office.

"The exhaustion of my spirits as a result of the increasing mental conflicts which I have lately undergone has made it, however, absolutely essential for me to report to Your Majesty that I am no longer able to carry out the duties of the Secretary of State for Naval Affairs.

"After Your Majesty's most gracious decision, I venture now to beg most humbly for gracious permission to resign my office as Secretary of State."

On March 17th I received my dismissal, being succeeded by Admiral von Capelle. In the summer of 1915 a decided supporter of the submarine campaign, he was now compelled, before accepting office, to undertake to support the Chancellor in all naval political questions of which the submarine campaign was regarded as one.

My position with the Emperor and the Chancellor was in March, 1916, so insecure that I had to reckon with the possibility of any convenient opportunity being used to force me to take my departure. I had already had to endure grave insults without protest. I tendered my resignation when my most intimate advisers had become convinced that it could no longer be postponed, since my exclusion from discussion in the face of all the assurances to the contrary had finally deprived me of any opportunity of useful work. I had also learnt from the Emperor's entourage that my

position with His Majesty was regarded as past any restoration. I could see the nation rushing into the abyss, and could no longer represent in the Reichstag or be responsible to the people for the dangers involved in any further procrastination in the conduct of the war. Nevertheless, I regarded my retirement as a very serious matter, since I knew that it would encourage the enemy in this confidence of victory. I had offered to His Majesty to make my departure less striking by basing it on grounds of ill-health, but this opportunity was not taken, and I was only able to lessen the impression created by the event by suppressing, in concurrence with the military government of the district of Brandenburg, and without any consideration for the feelings of the would-be participants, the popular demonstrations planned in my honour.

If I had foreseen that the battle of the Skager-Rak would once again strengthen my position, and that Hindenburg and Ludendorff would come to the command of the army, I would probably have sought to hold on in spite of all humiliations; and in that case, having regard to the greatly shaken position of Bethmann in the autumn of 1916, the Polish Proclamation might not have been published, greater efforts have been made to secure peace with the Czar, and the submarine campaign might after all have begun in time. But who can tell what Providence holds in store?

VI

On March 24th, 1916, the French steamer *Sussex* was torpedoed. To a question on the subject from the United States of America the Naval Staff replied on April 10th, before the arrival of the report of the submarine commander, that the German Government must assume that the damage to the *Sussex* was due to some other cause than the attack of a German submarine. Later, however, the report arrived that the *Sussex* had really been torpedoed by one of our submarines. According to the report of the particularly experienced and cautious commander, the vessel was painted as a warship, and there were a large number of British troops on deck in uniform, so that he thought he was even technically in order.

To our Note of April 10th, the incorrectness of which in fact was proved by the Americans, there followed the well-known American bullying Note of April 20th, which demanded the abandonment without delay of the system of submarine warfare that had hitherto prevailed, and threatened a rupture of relations. After this Note became public, I sent another memorandum to the Emperor, on April 24th, begging him urgently not to give way to Wilson. I received no answer to this Note, but the Government on May 4th sent a Note to America, yielding to their demands, but inviting them to insist on the observation by the British Government of the rules of international law as they were recognized before the war; the Note

further stated that if the United States did not succeed in this, the German Government would be faced by a wholly new position, in which it must reserve for itself complete freedom of decision.

Wilson had demanded the punishment of the submarine commander who had torpedoed the *Sussex*. The admiral in command of the marines in Flanders did not impose any punishment, since the commander had been in the right; whereupon the commander was punished by the Emperor himself. Save for the Mediterranean, the feeble remains that still survived of the campaign in effect vanished.

The events which followed the arrival of my above-mentioned memorandum at General Headquarters, as reported to me by an eye-witness, are characteristic of the forces that were at work against the submarine campaign. The memorandum was most unwelcome to the opponents, but it made a lasting impression on the Emperor, probably because it confirmed his own views, and he resolved to refuse Wilson's demand and to carry on the campaign without restrictions. He informed the Chancellor and the army chiefs of this decision. The Chancellor's objections at first met with no success. The Emperor was then strongly pressed by the Chief of the Cabinet, von Müller, to give way to the Chancellor, which in the end he did. Some weight is due to the fact that the Chief of the Naval Staff, in contradiction to his earlier memoranda to the Chief of the Cabinet, had come round to the Chancellor's view. In this last decision of the Em-

peror the army chiefs do not seem to have been asked for their views. In any event General von Falkenhayn immediately tendered his resignation, which was not, however, accepted.

The *Sussex* Note was a decisive turning-point of the war, the beginning of our capitulation. All the world could see that we were breaking down before America. From the time of this decision we went downhill. The moral indignation over submarine warfare in England and America had at first been only a piece of bluff designed to deter us, but it had gradually become more than bluff. Those persons in Germany who had a sensitive feeling for the idealistic and yet at bottom highly material power of prestige were greatly moved by the acceptance of the demands. Our decisions of March and May, 1916, freed England from the gravest material danger that it had ever known in all its history. In rejecting the submarine campaign, a last chance of salvation which had fallen into their lap like a gift of the gods, the German people not merely determined their own disappearance from the ranks of world-powers, but at the same time strengthened the determination of the English to hold out until they achieved the complete destruction of the Germans.

There were factors of uncertainty about the adoption of unrestricted submarine operations in the spring of 1916, just as there are in all questions of strategy, politics, and economics, but one can assert now, with more assurance than ever before, that it would have

brought the English to a conciliatory frame of mind, not of course to one which would have found such a lamentably stupid expression as the peace resolution of our Reichstag democrats of 1917—the English are politically too well educated for that—but to one sufficient to ensure us an acceptable peace. In the spring of 1916 we could certainly not afford to lose so much as a month, not only on account of the increase of the enemy defensive measures, but also because of the decline in our strength of resistance. If after at most a year of a freight space war England had felt the pinch of famine, the morale of our people and their reserves of strength would still have been high enough to enable us to wait for the result. For the really effective strength of a campaign undertaken at that time, and for the vital danger that it would have brought to England, I can now rely on a long series of English admissions, which our democrats and other interested parties in vain wish to sink in oblivion. Even in 1917, a whole year too late, we were close to the goal, so that one can see that the submarine campaign, undertaken only six months earlier, would have still been effective.

Thus, for example, on September 7th, 1917, *The Economist* writes:

"Though few realized the imminence of our peril at the time, we came within very little of losing the war because we forgot that a fighting control of the seas is without value unless one possesses also the means to use those seas which one controls. . . .

"Once during the past four years, the Germans came within a measurable distance of winning the war. This was not in the spring of 1918, when the British and French armies were reeling before the German assaults. It was in the spring of 1917, when the prospects on land appeared to be favourable. The Germans, defeated on the Somme, had retired to the Hindenburg Line and taken up the defensive on the west. Russia was still a factor in the war.

"Yet that spring of 1917 was actually the most critical and deadly dangerous period through which we have lived since the war began. For a short time it looked as if the Royal Navy had failed, and that our sea communications, upon which everything depended, were about to be broken. If the losses of British and Allied merchant steamers by submarine attacks had continued at the rate recorded for April, May, and June of 1917, the Germans would have won the war before that year had closed. But the navy . . . got to grips with the U-boat peril and much reduced its effectiveness."

The Morning Post of October 3rd, 1918, writes:

"Had Germany chosen to distribute her large force of cruisers upon the distant trade routes a week before the outbreak of war, she could have wrought what might have been disaster, and what would certainly have inflicted very serious loss. Then Germany delayed the great sea battle for the crippling of the British fleet until it was too late. . . . At a later period of the war Germany sought to achieve the same end by submarine warfare. It was the greatest danger with which this country has ever been confronted, and by virtue of determination, invention,

and indomitable hard work, Germany was once more foiled when she was almost within reach of success."

A statesman and an expert on the matter, Chiozza Money, stated in the House of Commons in November, 1918:

"In April, 1917, the German submarines were so successful that England would have been ruined in nine months if the destructions had continued at the same rate."

This Reuter report of November 15th, 1918, was sufficient to enrage any patriotic German who realizes what an utter ignorance of the nature of naval warfare was allowed to prevail in Germany and to throw away the last chance of our salvation.

The strangest incident in this great crisis for Germany, to my mind, was that those civilians who based their hopes of a tolerable peace, not on our arms, but on Wilson fighting for the freedom of the seas and England becoming of her own motion ready to arrive at an understanding, did not confine themselves to these political convictions, but also assumed a right to support them by judgments of their own on purely technical naval questions. Contradicting all expert authority, they took upon themselves to decide that in the historical moment in the spring of 1916 we "still had too few submarines." These men of the Wilhelmstrasse, or even of the editorial department of the *Frankfürter Zeitung,* stated in February, 1917, with

arrogant certainty: "We are beginning the submarine campaign at the right moment, as we now have enough submarines." And when the campaign, delayed by their fault, did not produce its effects as rapidly as it would, according to the experts, have done a year earlier, these men lost nothing of their audacity; instead of feeling ashamed that their delay had reduced the results of the submarine campaign by just the decisive degree,[1] they now condemned, after the event, and in contradiction to their own position at the beginning of 1917, the whole submarine war! To gain a proper impression of the manner in which, in the hour of Germany's destiny, questions of naval warfare were gambled with, one need only imagine diplomats, journalists, and members of parliament seeking to pronounce decisive strategical judgments on questions of land warfare. But it seemed that in sea warfare, a question of life and death to us, all things were possible among Germans. Instead of confining themselves to the American question, the political seriousness of which I certainly never misunderstood, our Germans, with their instinct for self-destruction, consoled themselves with the formula: "We had not enough submarines in 1916." Just as I was to be the scapegoat for the failing to give battle, on the pretext that the fleet material was too bad, so now those who had not enough courage to carry

[1] If Chiozza Money says that nine months of such success as we had in April, 1917, would have ruined England, there would still have been time in August, 1916, but not in February, 1917.

on the submarine campaign in defiance of Wilson laid the blame, to themselves and to the world, on "the insufficient number" of boats.[1]

This rumour, which was circulated everywhere, was the main means employed by the diplomatic and democratic supporters of the Government to prevent the timely use of the submarine weapon, and to substitute for a swift and mighty blow, and thus a blow most in accordance with the dictates of humanity, a policy of hesitation and delay, betraying weaknesses and a bad conscience, and setting the seal on all our misfortunes.[2]

In truth, as I prophesied in February, 1916, the damage that our available submarines could have achieved in 1916 was far greater than that caused in 1917. The decisive factor is not the number of submarines, but the number of sinkings. Our hesitant politicians were too clever to grasp this simple truth. The yield of the submarines sank as the enemy's defensive measures increased. These measures required years of preparation, years which we gave them. The submarines could only bring us victory during a certain period, and this period we threw away through fear of Wilson and hopes of his aid. The tragic figures which prove this could not be made public during the war,

[1] On submarine construction before the war, see Technical Supplement.

[2] The parties of the Left in the Reichstag have so large a share in the responsibility for delaying the campaign that justice compels me to mention that at the beginning of 1916 several sound men among the Social Democrats fully shared my point of view, but were unable to prevail.

a fact of which the opponents of the campaign took advantage to continue their misrepresentations. Out of the mass of proofs I select but one single fact. In the spring of 1916, with restricted, that is to say with quite inadequate, submarine warfare, the sinkings amounted to 17,000 tons per boat per voyage. The experience of 1916 shows that the results of unrestricted warfare are at least thrice as great as those of restricted. We should thus have been sure at that time of reaching a figure of 51,000 tons per boat per voyage. But in the summer of 1917 the actual sinkings were only 14,000 per boat per voyage, and in the autumn of 1917 they had fallen to 9,000. In the spring of 1916 we could reckon on 205 submarines (in commission, building, or undergoing tests) for the financial year then beginning. Of this number, 147 were building for delivery in the financial year.[1] From this one can calculate the results which would have attended a real submarine campaign in 1916. One must admit that the English are right in their view that they would have lost the war at that time if we had only had the courage to win it. When one looks through the submarine diaries of the year 1916, one can realize with what grief the commanders had then to let the easiest and richest booty pass before their eyes, and it becomes plain that they could have

[1] I do not trouble now to deal with the amazing rumour, typical indeed of the then conditions, that I had false figures submitted to the Budget Committee of the Federal Council, since it has been disposed of officially and judicially (only, it is true, after it had done its political service against me).

sunk on each voyage five or six times as much as was possible a year later.

Below I quote as an example the experiences of Senior Lieutenant Steinbrink, a particularly able commander, who was told off to test whether, under the regulations laid down in 1916 for submarine operations, any success was possible without infringing the regulations.

Commander's Diary, July-August, 1916

"The weather being very unfavourable for torpedo attacks, station could only be kept before the mouth of the Seine for four days, as long as the wind and sea made it easier to escape observation. During this time the incoming steamer traffic was watched day and night at a distance of from three to eight knots from the main point of entry, and each single steamer that came sufficiently near was approached, and an estimate of her character made at the shortest possible range. In all forty-one day-approaches (that is, approaches ready for discharging torpedo, but without actually discharging) were carried out, and none of the steamers showed the signs indicated as distinctive of transports, nor did their appearance in general give a pronounced impression of their being transports. On the other hand, in the early morning light, we saw in all six camouflaged 1,500 to 3,000-ton steamers (three collier-type and three cargo vessels); they were painted black, with grey or brown upper works, and showed no flag. Each ship was separately convoyed by a camouflaged destroyer, or by one or two armed trawlers. I was firmly convinced that they were transporting troops or important material, but as my view

was not confirmed by the signs mentioned in the regulations (troops in large numbers, parks of guns or waggons, dispositions of men on deck), I could not attack these either.

"Under the conditions at present laid down for submarine attacks on transports, there is absolutely nothing to be done, and the attempt, which in view of the efficient counter-measures of the enemy is not without danger, is hardly worth the efforts of the crew."

Attitude of the flotilla to the above diary extract:

The object of the undertaking was to ascertain whether, with the regulations now in force—that is to say, that merchant vessels are only to be dealt with on the lines of the Prize Order, and that no vessels other than transports ascertained to be such beyond question are to be torpedoed without warning—it is possible to cause damage to the communications of the English army in France, which in my view is at present the navy's most important task.

The result is unquestionably as follows:

Under the present restrictions, the dispatch of submarines against the lines of communication offers no prospects of success. . . . Attempts in this direction are accordingly abandoned for the time, until the regulations permit the torpedoing without warning of all vessels other than hospital ships sailing between England and France.

Trade warfare in accordance with the Prize Order is still to be carried on in the western part of the Channel, in spite of the danger run by the submarines on rising to the surface. We are forced to this decision, since this is at present the only means we possess to damage the enemy.

This result of the undertaking was only to be expected, but I thought it nevertheless valuable to have the evidence of actual experience.

It is obvious what a great influence our submarines could have had on the course of the Somme fighting. But, apart from all such questions of detail, anyone who was clearly conscious that the whole existence of the German people depended on this war could not read without the deepest emotion such reports as the above of the crippling of our most effective weapon.

Our conduct in the spring of 1916 showed the whole world, save a few German diplomats and democrats, that Germany was moving to her destruction.

VII

Not having had any part in the events which led to the opening of the unrestricted campaign on February 1st, 1917, I can only deal shortly with them here. So far as my information goes, they presented a typical instance of the disorganization of the Bethmann system of government. If it be true that just about the New Year negotiations were in progress between Bethmann and Wilson which gave us promise of a reasonable peace, or which at any rate Bethmann himself regarded as hopeful, then it is incomprehensible that at that very moment he should have allowed the campaign to be opened. I cannot think that the military authorities, if the politicians kept them sufficiently informed of the negotiations, would have resisted a

postponement to enable the diplomatic situation to define itself. In the autumn of 1916, G.H.Q., in view of the attack on Roumania, had thought it necessary to take seriously the danger of war with Holland, which was incorrectly reported by the Chancellor and Ambassador von Kühlmann, and accordingly agreed to some delay in the opening of the campaign. After the overthrow of Roumania the situation was different. G.H.Q. doubted seriously whether we could hold out for another winter (1917-18). As the Chief of the Naval Staff, von Holtzendorff thought himself in a position to promise that England would be ready for peace after a six months' submarine campaign; the conclusion to be drawn from the desire to obtain peace by August, 1917, was that the campaign must be opened in February, 1917. This calculation had, however, only a limited value, and could not be taken as dogmatic. As I have stated, I think too that, if the various separate departments had been permitted to keep sufficiently in touch with general policy, none of them would have clung so rigidly to their own calculations. The old weakness of our system of government, the exclusion of the separate departments from general responsibility, and the withholding from them of information necessary for the formation of their views, seems thus, if my impressions are accurate, to have been responsible also for the submarine campaign cutting across pending diplomatic negotiations.

If it is further correct that Wilson felt himself in-

sulted in his confidence in German politicians by this brusque change of front, then there was here, too, another paralliel to the methods of surprise employed in July, 1914, and the Polish "slap in the face for the Czar. "But at this stage of the war repetition of such conduct virtually amounted to the final loss of our capacity for international negotiation. The damage caused by this loss would have to be paid not so much by our diplomats as by the people in general and the Hohenzollern monarchy in particular.

The strangeness of the proceedings would be still more striking if the statement is correct that the Chancellor even then personally disapproved of the campaign, and allowed himself to be out-voted by others. It is impossible to understand why Bethmann, if those were his convictions, did not take the obvious course and why the Emperor did not allow him to resign and replace him by a Chancellor who believed in the campaign.

The crowning touch to a piece of recklessness which no amount of ingenuity could render harmless is to be found, if the above assumption be correct, in the fact that Bethmann expressed the view in the Reichstag, against his own convictions, that the very moment had now arrived which, politically and navally, gave the greatest promise of success from the unrestricted campaign. One may just point out in passing how presumptuous it was to hold such a view in the face of the opinions given by the Admiralty, the Naval Staff, the High Sea fleet, the Marine Corps, and

G.H.Q., in the spring of 1916, even if the Chief of the Naval Staff had about the end of 1916 brought himself somewhat nearer to Bethmann's standpoint.

However that may be, it was certainly unfortunate that the campaign should be under the control of a statesman who was at bottom unfavourably disposed towards it and who accordingly, just as he had hitherto prevented its adoption, now in this last stage, hampered its operation. In 1916 we could perhaps have accepted the responsibility of weakening the campaign by exceptions in favour of certain neutrals. In 1917 it was too late for such measures. If we staked everything on this one card, it was the very first necessity that all means, military, naval, political, personal, and technical, should be placed at the service of the campaign. The navy should have postponed every other task, and put absolutely every available man and machine to work constructing boats or engines, or in the yards. The army should have released the workmen, the politicians should have done their part, and the diplomats, instead of standing on one side and waiting on events, should have worked with all their heart for the campaign. Instead, exceptions were made in favour of European neutrals, which weakened the effect of the operations, and both in naval and in constructional work there was not that extreme concentration on the submarine campaign that alone in this advanced stage could have given it the necessary force. The fundamental fault of our whole conduct of the war, the lack of any unity and determination compar-

able to that displayed by the English, persisted so long as the Bethmann system held the reins of Government.

When the Government undertook the responsibility first of undertaking a campaign in which it had no real faith, and then of hindering its operation ,the prospects of the campaign were for that reason alone far worse in reality than they would have been in 1916. Until my retirement the Admiralty were building as many submarines as was in any way possible. I thrice toured all the yards and personally examined every slip to ascertain whether an increased output could be achieved.[1]

I am not aware whether the construction of submarines was continued with the necessary energy after my departure. The fatal element, however, was the increase of the enemy counter-measures, which exceeded even all our fears. England had entered the war unprepared against the submarine danger. As soon as it recognized the deadly nature of the danger, it set itself, with the ample aid of America, to the creation

[1] I mention in passing that if the campaign had been opened in 1916, it would presumably have been impossible for the British High Seas fleet to have remained so consistently in hiding at Scapa Flow after the battle of the Skager-Rak. I would also mention that at the beginning of 1916 I urged at a council that orders should be given to the captains of the German merchantmen lying in America and elsewhere to sail out to sea and sink their vessels, or otherwise to render them useless. As they were not of course warships, they could not have been prevented from doing this. Ballin spoke against the proposal, saying that the Americans would have hanged the captains (which was impossible), and that we should lose our fine vessels for good. The result was that in 1917-18 it was these very fast-sailing vessels that did us the greatest damage by transporting American troops, etc.

of defensive measures, which began to operate with great success, not indeed in 1916, but in 1917. The Entente was industrially our superior in quantity, and the defence thus improved more rapidly than the number of submarines could be increased. In the spring of 1918 we were at times losing more submarines than we were completing.

This position was, indeed, to be foreseen in 1916. I mention a few of the more important of these defensive measures: transformation of merchantmen into warships by the supply of 15,000 guns with trained gun-crews, systematic sweeping of the seas by aeroplanes, airships, and surface vessels, extensive employment of submarine sound apparatus, construction of submarine-chasers, traps, and depth bombs; defensive obstacles such as nets and mines; further, indirect measures such as the tripling of the American shipbuilding yards, the feverish haste in construction of cargo vessels, the utmost possible accumulation of stocks, the development of the intelligence service, the monopolization and rationing of freight space, the establishment and development of the convoy system, which involved years of work, and constituted a tremendous achievement on the part of the English, and lastly the steadily increasing pressure on neutrals, ending in the robbery of their commercial shipping.

The consequence of these measures was the serious reduction of sinkings, amounting, as explained above, to the loss of four-fifths of the former effectivness

of the submarines. One should bear in mind that at a later stage there were many thousands of submarine-chasers, gradually built up, at work against us.

In February, 1916, our boats could still play havoc among enemy merchantmen like wolves among a flock of sheep; later they had to carry on a regular fight. A mere work of destruction had become a warlike operation involving great danger and loss.

The question now arises whether the campaign, if it had opened in the spring of 1916 instead of in that of 1917, would not simply have resulted in the arrival one year earlier of those hordes of American troops on the continent which turned the balance against us on the western front in 1918.

I leave on one side the fact that General Headquarters, like everyone else, had not thought it possible that these enormous numbers of American troops could be brought to Europe, and had accordingly, at the cost of substantially thinning our fighting strength, sent a million men to the East for economic purposes which must after all, in comparison to the main aim of the war, be described as secondary. I would only point out that in the spring of 1916 the probability that the Americans would send troops across was much less than it was a year later. In the first place, the greater effects of the campaign on enemy freight space would have limited from the outset the possibilities of American military development of strength. In addition, American opinion was not then ready for a declaration of war against us.

In February and March, 1916, an overwhelming majority in the American Congress had, in opposition to Wilson's views, expressed itself in favour of a warning being given against American citizens travelling on armed vessels of belligerents, so far as it could do so without formally disowning the President. The same thing happened in the Senate. The arming of merchantmen and their employment to attack war vessels, against the existing conventions of maritime war, was at that time not yet regarded as legal. As the Government did not pass on to me its political information, I did not see so clearly in the spring of 1916 as I do now, that Wilson, especially before his re-election, could not have declared war against us at that time. By yielding to Wilson then in sheer fear of this bogy, and by falling back on pretexts such as the Roumanian harvest, the need to consider the American Committee for Relief in Belgium, and the like, we turned the bogy into a genuine terror for 1917. The great debates of February and March, 1916, in the Congress and Senate were, as Hale described them, an exhortation to Wilson for peace, as urgent as any a Congress had ever made to a President. But the success of his bullying note raised Wilson to a height such as a President had seldom occupied before, and, as was natural, fundamentally changed the attitude of the American people to the submarine question.

According to the view of our ambassador von Hintze, who travelled through America at this time

on his way home from Peking, Zimmermann's well-known Mexico telegram rendered Wilson decisive assistance in the realization of his wish to take his stand against us. Ballin, who knew my views, wrote to me on July 19th, 1917, that he had recently given to innumerable questions the answer that the submarine campaign as now carried out "was not a realization of the Tirpitz idea," adding the following remarks:

"Last winter I had already expressed both orally and in writing the view that, if Your Excellency had remained at the helm, you would not have begun the unrestricted campaign at all at the present time. And I hold to my view that if you had been in office while Wilson was led by the nose in the way he was, his ambitious efforts for peace were thwarted, and he was finally placed in an impossible position by the Mexico telegram, you would certainly have considered very carefully whether it could be right, either politically or navally, to announce and introduce unlimited submarine operations, without giving Wilson an opportunity to withdraw with dignity from the situation.

"In my view—which is shared not only by Count Bernstorff, Prince Hatzfeld, and Privy Councillor Albert, but also by everyone else who was on the other side up to the outbreak of war—Wilson would never have been able to declare war against us if we had not turned the population of the Western and Southern States, which were wholly friendly to Germany, against us, by the Mexico telegram and a whole series of other mistakes.

"What the entry of America into the war means for the Entente, I do not need to explain to you."

My answer of July 23rd, 1917, is well illustrated by the following quotation:

"My telegram to Bassermann and to Excellency Spahn was intended to show my conviction that the proposed Reichstag declaration seemed to me misconceived from the point of view of both home and international politics. Even if one desired to take the standpoint that an agreement with Wilson should be reached as quickly as possible at the price of abandoning the campaign, it would from that purely business point of view seem to me to be wrong to depreciate at the same time the effect of the campaign to the whole world, and to whine for peace.

"As you know, I was taken by surprise, both as to manner and time, by the declaration of submarine warfare on February 4th, 1915, and this all the more since on January 27th I had been in agreement with the then Chancellor as to the postponement of the campaign for the time being. But once this decision was announced to the world, and that with a certain flourish of trumpets, it was vital to hold to it. By our continual, and in part undignified, yielding to his jostling, we have really made Wilson what he is. The true policy for us was to take the diplomatic offensive against Wilson's incredible breaches of neutrality, nor would this have involved any danger. The bullying note we should never have accepted, on purely material grounds. I do not deal with the by no means wise or happy manner in which we handled the diplomatic side of the *Sussex* case itself. In the spring of 1916 the United States would not have declared war against us, as is sufficiently proved by the then discussions in the Senate and Congress. That was the right moment to conduct the campaign with

more severity; both ourselves and our allies still had a considerable economic strength to throw in, and Wilson was not in a position to declare war, for the further reason that his election was then imminent. The submarine needs time to produce its full effect, and time we then had to spare. We could thus too have afforded to make greater concessions to neutral shipping than may be presumed to have appeared possible later to our authorities. In truth, on February 1st of this year, we had already been thrust close to the edge of the abyss. There is a further point of view, arising from the English counter-measures against the submarines. In your letter you mention the convoys. Now, convoys are only an effective measure after large numbers of submarine-chasers have been built. We have given the English time to build them and time too for the effective arming of their entire merchant fleet and for a whole series of further counter-measures. In quantity, the Entente can outstrip the increase of our submarines. It was of course not possible to determine in advance exactly to what extent these counter-measures would balance our increase, but anyone who has worked on such technical questions will know that such a balance can always be reached. It was thus economically, politically, and navally a mistake to postpone the energetic employment of the submarine weapon. I held this conviction just because, as you rightly assume, I never underestimated the effect of America's entry into the war. I know of course that you hold the view that I neglected submarines in favour of dreadnoughts. I feel sure that you are wrong in this; at the outbreak of war, although we certainly did not boast about it, we led the world in submarines. Further, the long-range submarines could not be developed more rapidly

than the engines permitted; ordinary internal-combustion engines were not sufficient for them.

"With regard to the effect of the campaign in its present form, and to the question of its continuance, the fact that I should have selected another method of campaign and that I am compelled to regard prospects as seriously lessened by the delay in opening the campaign cannot deprive me of the firm conviction that, once it has been undertaken, we have no option but to continue it with all our energy until England is forced to make such a peace as will give us a basis for our economic reconstruction and for the maintenance of our position as a world-power.

"I think, too, that it is still possible, although at a slower rate and with more difficulty than would have been the case before, to achieve such a peace by the campaign against enemy freight space. For this, it is true, we require of the Government and the nation an energy not diverted or weakened by any obstacle, and a political activity that will fully support our conduct of the war."

In any case, even if America had acted in 1916 exactly as she did in 1917, it would always have been better for us to meet her a year earlier, when we and our allies were stronger. It is certain that America would in no case have permitted an absolute defeat of England. But what the campaign, if begun in 1916, could have achieved was to prevent an absolute defeat of Germany. According to all the experience acquired both then and later, the campaign in 1916 would have had at first a monthly result of at the very least 700,000 tons of sinkings, rising later in all probability

to 1,000,000 tons. I do not rely here on the higher estimates given by experienced commanders. Of these results one can at any rate say with confidence that the resulting damage to England's world trade and military strength, apart from any general political effects, would have substantially and permanently relieved our Western front, and would have gravely hampered the application of such great American strength in the land war. The increase in freight space, also, that the Entente received in 1917 could not have been obtained in 1916, as the newly built yards were not then at work. It would be foolish to deny that the views which I formed in the spring of 1918 might also possess elements of uncertainty, but we had then already sufficient experience to know that the longer the war lasted the more the menace of America would increase. In 1916 it was more dangerous than in 1915. The increase was continuous, and we had to face this development squarely.

VIII

The tale of the submarine is long and painful. The character of our political system in these last few years was bound to produce one step after another of muddled confusion.

The first step in the submarine warfare, the declaration of a barred zone, was undertaken prematurely in an undeveloped and unsuitable form, and with unnecessary flourish. We followed that up by not holding our ground, continually displaying weakness and

fear. We yielded to Wilson, and raised him to a greatly strengthened position in America. Our appearance of an uneasy conscience encouraged the English case that the campaign was immoral. By this most unwise behaviour we made it more difficult and dangerous to resume the campaign. For now, after we had so long foregone our clear rights, it seemed, as if even from our own point of view we were sinning against humanity, although the world said never a word of protest when England did much worse things. In determination, cruelty, and cynical depreciation of her opponents, England is four times our superior, as she is too in her cleverness in making her case plausible even to the enemy. And so the German people, in its unlimited capacity for belief in the foreigner, was misled by our wavering, and patiently regarded as nothing but an act of divine ordinance the English war of starvation, which brought bankruptcy and destruction, consumption and death, to this hitherto flourishing people. And in comparison to this form of warfare, if you please, the submarine campaign was to be called cruel and immoral, the campaign which aimed at cargoes and cost the enemy scarcely a human life—in all the years of war not so many lives as there fell Germans on a single day on the western front, or as died daily among the German civil population actually after the armistice was signed, through the inhuman retention of the starvation blockade. But there is no limit to Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy, or to German lack of judgment.

The orders to submarine commanders constitute a string of riders, restrictions, and contradictions, which have cost us most precious German lives and robbed us of final victory. The campaign failed because Germany did not hold consistently to the view that every just weapon available for naval warfare should be used relentlessly to the bitter end.

If this course was not to be followed, we should have frankly accepted defeat in the spring of 1916. The terms would have been less severe then than later. The army and the diplomats had no means of averting defeat, and in that case it was a crime not to end the war against England. Time was working against us. Still, but not for long, the navy had a weapon that could strike at England's heart. The question was simply, would we risk the American danger? If we would not, then we were bound to grow weaker and weaker until we collapsed. If we would, then not a month was to be lost. This was the simple matter for decision. We could not try to evade it. It was pure waste of time to wait for America's intermediation against England. That was my view of the position at that time, and results have shown that it was the true view.

The declaration of February 8th, 1916, that we would thenceforth attack armed merchant vessels was a mere trick to deceive the people. After this declaration a perfectly lawful torpedoing, in the *Sussex* case, was at first denied and then disapproved. And after this second surrender to Wilson, instead of clearing

our decks, we decided in the autumn of 1916, over the heads of Hindenburg and Scheer, to test the new half measure of the submarine cruiser campaign. Then there came the muddle of combined unlimited campaign and peace negotiation at the end of 1916. Finally we undertook the unrestricted campaign, which a year earlier would have appeared as the act of a strong people confident of victory, as a measure of despair, half-heartedly and with already broken prestige. Then came the further sickly story of strategical weakening, under a political chief who had no real faith himself in the success of the weapon.

Had we been able in Germany to foresee the Russian revolution, we should perhaps not have needed to regard the submarine campaign of 1917 as a last resort. But in January, 1917, there was no visible sign of the revolution. On the other hand, even Government departments in Germany were plainly not fully aware of the devastating effect of our diplomatic mistakes in dealing with Wilson, in particular from the *Sussex* note to the Mexico telegram, which alone rendered it possible for the American people to be swept with such amazing vehemence into a war which had so little to do with their own interests.

It is difficult to say, whether, if I had been a responsible statesman, knowing then all the available details, I should have still begun the campaign at the beginning of 1917. Our desperate position of course hardly left us any other way of escape from complete ruin. The value of the campaign was by now lessened and

the dangers involved were greater. As a private citizen without inside information, I had at the time a profound feeling that it was dangerously late, but was convinced by the attitude of the men then in office that the risk could be and would have to be taken.[1]

And as a matter of fact, if we had then directed our whole undivided strength to this one aim, as our last chance, in the manner in which England set to work on her counter-measures, we should have inspired instead of depressing the moral resistance of the people; and in that case we might perhaps have achieved, not victory, as we might have gained had we begun the campaign at the proper time (1916), but at any rate a tolerable peace. In the late summer of 1918 the supreme naval command held the conviction that in spite of all the increased difficulties the submarines were still causing such serious damage to England that we might expect on her part a substantially greater

[1] As no official material was at my disposition, I was not sufficiently well informed to give any authoritative weight to my own instinctive fear that it was then dangerously late for the campaign to be undertaken. As the Government held it to be necessary, at any rate as a last counsel of despair, and even those who had hitherto opposed it seemed now to have wholly changed their views and were awakening in the public mind the greatest expectations of success in the campaign, it was plainly my duty not to take any steps. In confidential circles, however, I certainly could not suppress my anxieties as to this last and perhaps effective means of salvation. I remember how a well-known member of the Reichstag hastened to meet me as I was walking in the Tiergarten in February, 1917, and congratulated me on the submarine campaign, and how he became silent with amazement at the anxious tone of my reply. When I discovered that in May, 1917, there was even a note in *The Times* that I had expressed myself pessimistically over the campaign as having been begun too late, I refrained with even more care from expressing my fears.

readiness for peace in the spring of 1919. The campaign was sacrificed in October, 1918, just at the very worst moment, when it had just been restored to full operation by a substantial increase in the number of submarines. The navy had such complete confidence in the results of this arduous and dangerous service that the sudden suspension of the campaign, even before the conclusion of an armistice based on the preliminaries of peace, had a most destructive effect on the morale of the whole fleet. The crews felt that they had been deceived when the Government on Wilson's demand suddenly disowned what was our most important weapon. This feeling of disappointment and discouragement was one of the causes of the men's loss of confidence in their superiors.

Little was wanting for the achievement of a good peace. It was not the fault of the fighting forces that we did not obtain it. True, when Hindenburg and Ludendorff were at last called to the command, it was too late for the army to win it; but the navy was twice in a position to bring a possible peace within grasp—in the autumn of 1914 with the fleet, and (still more probably) in the spring of 1916 with the submarine. Terrible is the realization that our present position could have been avoided not only by political means, but also by naval action.

CONCLUSION

I

THE German people did not understand the sea. In the hour of its destiny it did not use its fleet. To-day, all that I can do for the fleet is to write its epitaph. Our people has passed through a tragedy without parallel in its swift rise to the position of a world-power and its still swifter decline, due to the temporary littleness of its politics and its lack of national feeling.

If one considers the tragic fate of our fleet, which is bound up with that of our people, one might come to the view that every effort of a European State to win itself equal weight at sea with England is waste labour from the start, but I do not think that a careful and accurate historian would arrive at this conclusion.

Spain was mistress of the world of her day, when England in the fight against the Spanish silver ships —*Westward Ho!*—developed from an agricultural people into a piratical State, and finally defeated the Great Armada. Spain was equal to military conquest and could hold her overseas colonies for a time, but she lacked trade and traffic, which form the second condition of lasting influence at sea.

Holland had a vast and wealthy trade, and thus excited the greed of England. She possessed too a

good war fleet, which once, under de Ruyter, gained her a just peace with its guns trained on London. But Holland was small and had no hinterland of her own. While Germany lay bleeding from the Thirty Years War, Louis XIV committed the great historical error of attacking Holland, his natural ally, in the back. But the Netherlands might have held their own for a longer time, and have bridged the gap until a new ally grew up for them in Germany, if the Mynheers of Amsterdam had not given too much thought to immediate profits and worshipped their pepper-bags. In spite of the urgent representations of their great Admiral, they let their fleet fall into decay, and thus brought about the downfall of their country.

The rise of France to power at sea varied with her political changes; the way that Richelieu and Colbert trod was often deserted. Nevertheless, before the outbreak of the revolution, the strength of France at sea stood as high as that of England. It was mainly through her fleet that Washington secured freedom for America. Suffern had maintained the balance against the English in India, and the Mediterranean was in the main French. The revolution destroyed the corps of naval officers and let the ships and crews go to ruin. Napoleon then learnt that not even his energy and genius could create sea-power at a blow, and thus the numerically superior Franco-Spanish fleet was defeated by the better quality of Nelson and his "band of brothers."

The naval prestige of England then lasted through the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany possessed all the conditions of sea-power: trade and commerce of world-wide importance, moving almost too rapidly in their mighty development, military genius, organizing capacity and an industrious temperament, a strong constitution and a patriotic people. The time was short to make good the delay of years. But we were near to our peaceful goal when a calamitous policy set us at war with the four strongest naval powers of Europe, of whom England alone was doubly our superior. From the start we could not reckon on complete victory, on the defeat of England; but I dare express the conviction that our sea-power, taken all in all, was very considerable and already strong enough to harass England to such a degree that we could have been able to reimburse ourselves for our heavy losses. To obtain this end we should have grasped the idea that a war of annihilation was being waged against Germany, and in military matters as well as politically have acted accordingly, and above all staked our fleet fearlessly at the right time and under a single command. The general situation did not permit us to miss opportunities. More terrible than the sale of the old German fleet by Hannibal Fischer is the end of the Imperial Navy. That attempt of our fathers was premature and attempted with inadequate means; while our attempt, though it was late in beginning, depended on a Prussian Ger-

many and ought to have succeeded. Whether our grandsons will again be able to make the attempt lies hidden in the lap of the future. Should they ever do so, may they learn from our attempt and gather confidence.

If we consider the rise of Prussia-Germany without any illusions, from the complete disorganization after the Thirty Years' War to the height of our prosperity in July, 1914, it appears almost a miracle that our country succeeded as well as it did. Situated in the middle of Europe with difficult access to the ocean; possessing natural boundaries of only moderate strength; surrounded by nations who to-day, as for centuries, have been lying in wait to attack us —such is Germany's position. Possibly these conditions, and possibly to a similar degree the characteristics of our race are the reasons why Germany's power and prosperity did not proceed from the people itself, but is almost in the nature of a work of art, erected by a series of constructors of the state whom destiny has granted to us in the last three centuries. Can anyone believe that the "Ewige Reichstag" which outlawed Frederick the Great, that the Frankfort Parliament or any other plebiscite would have helped us forward? Prussia-Germany was on the contrary the work of strong individuals who demanded and enforced fulfilment of duty and subordination of the individual to the interests of the State, and who had the ability to keep their aims in sight.

At the beginning of this century we entered on a

new period with utterly new conditions of life. Our nation with its flourishing industry was forced to take part in international trade on a large scale or see its growth stopped. States are upheld by the forces which have created them. Such forces were for Prussia-Germany real power and devotion to the state as an entity, a state which was not a visionary project of a fraternization of Teutonic nations, which scheme the Anglo-Saxons have twice in our history pressed on us in order to choke German national aspirations.

It was my conviction that the mission of Germany for the good of Europe and of the whole world never reached its complete fulfilment. We had almost but not quite succeeded in bringing Germany as a pioneer into a new age. A sea-power of considerable strength made it possible to obtain peace with honour, or if it was unavoidable, of waging war with tolerable success. Our fleet was besides an important and necessary instrument for bringing our people more in touch with the everyday work and the current thought of the outside world. When our future powerlessness at sea has rendered our decline still more acute and made reconstruction impossible, coming generations may possibly recall this fact.

After peace and war, power and honour are lost, those who are to blame stand on the ruins and forge history. They deprive our simple and politically incapable race of belief in itself and in the logical consistency of its history; they revile the old German State, its prosperity, and its achievements, among the

latter especially our navy which was our best political trump card, and take the greatest trouble to break the threads which bind us to our past development. To be sure, our old State needed certain reforms, but it possessed in full the capacity for development to meet the requirements of a new age of our children and their descendants. But the Revolution, throwing overboard everything that had made us great was the greatest crime ever committed against the future of our people. Our breakdown is not due to any defects in our old state system, but to the inadequacy of the persons who tried to run it. Our upper classes had to a large extent sunk into decadence; materialism had become a national characteristic; the influence of universal suffrage and the vote by ballot, which always tends to place power in the hands of demagogues, was not counterbalanced by a strong government or a steady upper class. Thus the men who formed our Government, whether in the Bundesrath or in the Reichstag, and represented the State during the war, were not equal to their tasks. If even one of the legislative powers had worked correctly, our disaster would never have attained its present proportions.

Our enemies placed dictators at their head who, when necessary, enforced with iron will the determination of their people to win victory or death. On our side the government in power openly allowed processes of disintegration to go on in Germany's most dangerous hour, when all thoughts, all hearts should have combined against the outer foe. The worst

instincts of our race were fostered by the disintegrating, un-German spirit which gradually gained the upper hand with our people. It now penetrates our whole life, and German national feeling seems at present too indolent to oppose it. A realization of the State as a whole has hitherto been insufficiently developed in our democracy.

The new era in our national life began its reign by stripping our people of their honour, in addition to their other misfortunes, and exposing them to the contempt of the world. Thus only has it been possible for our enemies to destroy us so mercilessly, as they can persuade the better part of their population and the rest of the world that we are criminals and deserve no better treatment. Admiral Beatty furnishes me a painful example of this. On August 23rd, 1914, he signalled to the officers and crew saved from the sinking *Mainz:* "I am proud to welcome such brave men on board my squadron." In November, 1918, on the contrary, he gave the order to his own crews before meeting the German crews who came to deliver up their ships: "Never forget that the enemy is a despicable beast."

Though I cannot shake off the fear that Germany has lost her last chance of rising to the rank of a great Power, she will at least attain to a new life with honour when she shakes off this depravity and lack of discipline which are now holding her, and coming to her senses recognizes her old traditions and the forces which made her great. Personally I do not

at this time believe that this can happen under a Republican Government. We lack too many of the qualities of the men on the Rütli; and in addition there is our difficult geographical position, the constant influx of non-German elements, and the divisions of creed. All these considerations seem to make monarchical power indispensable for a German State. Breaking down our historical development was therefore a mistake, no matter what kind of constitution one may advocate. The great deeds of the Hohenzollern, which cannot be wiped out by recent mistakes, of necessity determine the destiny of our people. The republican idea as we have developed it is based on promises to the masses which cannot be fulfilled. In order to keep the masses in hand, therefore, democracy is continually forced to give "rights" the first place and consign "duties" to the second rank. This course can never get Germany to its feet. If in future we desire to live again as a nation, we must return to the fundamental principle of our old State, that only work for the whole produces in the end benefit for the individual, and unrestricted individualism destroys the State.

There only remains for loyal Germans to-day concentration against the madness, both material and moral, that has overtaken us, to keep us from still more dreadful ruin. To save all that we can that is German is worthy of the best efforts of our noblest souls.

Let our hope be the coming generation. We were

never born to be slaves. During two thousand years our race has risen again and again, no matter how complete the overthrow.

Should these memoirs of mine support and further strengthen faith in ourselves, the last service which I can render my country will have been performed.

APPENDIX

I

EXTRACTS FROM MY WAR-LETTERS

The notes in diary form of which a selection is given below were regularly jotted down in haste, late every evening, or shortly before the departure of the dispatch-rider. I must not, therefore, be taken to task for disjointedness, and defects in style. The idea of publication never entered my head. When, after the *débâcle* of our Fatherland, I decided on publishing a part of these fleeting past impressions, it was only because they seemed to serve as a not unimportant supplement to my recollections, and above all because they show that the opinions therein expressed did not arise after the war ended, but in all essential points agreed with the judgments I had formed while the war was running its course.

1914

Coblenz,
August 18th.

A whole world is mobilizing against us. We must see it through to the last—that is the only possibility of maintaining our position in the world. Up till now, I feel that in this connexion I am of more use here than in Berlin. Will this feeling continue? *Chi lo sa?*

Pohl, released from his office, is more accessible. I pay him all honour and hitherto have given him the chief initiative.'

COBLENZ,
August 19th.

Ultimatum from Japan destroys twenty years of successful activity; but we must go through with it, so long as it is in the least possible. To-day, conversation with Bethmann and Jagow, lasting an hour—Pohl also there. I have used every endeavour to keep them firm. Breakfast with His Majesty. His Majesty was pretty well pleased with the news from the seat of war. After the meal I had to walk about the garden with him, for more than two hours. Fortunately we walked slowly, and it was warm. I tried all I could to keep him firm. Most of the time it was not required. He saw the situation with complete clearness, and his opinions were clearly expressed. If only he had not had Bethmann during these last years, all might have gone better. He was proud that his six sons were facing the enemy. I congratulated him thereon. It was necessary that this should be so, for the sake of the Hohenzollern dynasty. He was, to my mind, a bit too optimistic with regard to the beating of England, and expressed his strong belief in the justice of God. I confirmed this belief, but added that we must, on our side, be deserving of it. Men were wanted in all positions. I couldn't very well lay my finger on the wound, especially as I am convinced that he entirely recognizes Bethmann's shortcomings.

COBLENZ,
August 20th.

Again this morning, long confabs with the very incompetent Bethmann and with Jagow. Bethmann has merely continental conceptions. He doesn't see that we can, as a purely European continental State, cease to exist. In spite of that, be prepared for the great possibility, that, later, anathemas will fall on me.

COBLENZ,
August 21st.

How much I wish, personally, that I hadn't to experience this war. I still cannot comprehend why we couldn't come to a *modus vivendi* with Russia. The Balkans, according to to-day's news, seem to be again lukewarm. Shall we ever tear to pieces the world-web which perfidious Albion has spun around us? Alas! how terribly right I've been.

COBLENZ,
August 22nd.

It is hard to sit here, comparatively inactive, at a moment when the world is in conflagration. The victory of the Bavarian Crown Prince has excited here great jubilation, all the more that further developments are expected. We, the navy, can, for example, contribute so little towards anything, and that is what makes our position so abominable. The English fleet stays in its ports and operates as a *fleet in being*. That is what is so rarely understood among us. The Eng-

lish aim at the starvation and paralysis of our economic existence. It is to be hoped that providence will let them too suffer some time or other for so unconscionably setting Europe in flames. It is a remarkable situation; the North and East seas free, yet we commercially strangled. In the meantime, the war on land rules everything. But how will it be later?

COBLENZ,
August 23rd.

No, in spite of the news of victories, which up till now come pouring in, one cannot rejoice, and it is to be hoped that our press will put restraint on itself. So far there have been no decisive results (though certainly in the fighting south of Metz 150 guns have been captured), and nobody seems to understand that the great danger against the polo-playing Englishmen is still to be overcome. If we had had no fleet, England would have been against us ever since Sedan. If we had made more progress with our fleet, England wouldn't have risked it. If we don't want to be utterly beaten, we must build fleets; that is the only way by which we can again get an outlet for our exports and industry. I tremble for our Germany.

COBLENZ,
August 24th.

Our military harbours are no longer threatened. I am preparing to utilize further the *personnel* there. The army has so far had enormous successes and the

navy none. That is what makes my position here so dreadful, after twenty years of effort. No one will understand. It is always possible that it won't come to fighting in the North Sea, and further possible, if not very probable, that the end may come sooner than we thought. England alone is the obstacle. The strength of the French army is now nearly broken. All depends now on the battles on the northern front. Since this morning our troops (Brandenburgers it is to be hoped!) have been fighting with two English divisions; pray God that the arch scoundrels may be annihilated, for it is they who have set light to our cultured Europe, in cold blood, from sheer lust for conquest and gain. I can do but little, and, despite the glorious victory, a great weight oppresses me. You will help me to bear it when the time comes and the finger of scorn is pointed at me. Inwardly I am, of course, absolutely certain that the only thing for Germany was to take up the question of the navy, if our people were not to sink—

COBLENZ,
August 25th.

Don't let the reverse in the East alarm you. That was foreseen. Certainly our generalship there, at the start, may not have been A1. The struggle from Basel as far as Namur is gigantic, and not yet over. The Crown Prince is hard pressed, and the French are fighting well. We ought not to crow too soon.

COBLENZ,
August 25th.

The sinking of the *Magdeburg* you will have heard of. What a pity! Such a beautiful ship! The *Mainz* and other cruisers have accomplished a daring feat. Almost past understanding that they got away. Here hopes are high, although the general order for a retreat by the French High Command has not led, as hoped, to a cutting off of a great part of the army. The English have also withdrawn, though our cavalry are on their heels. The latter, however, are in need of provisions. The forced marches of Pomeranians and Brandenburgers have been colossal. It appears that my Brandenburgers have fought against the English. Yesterday evening I met King Ludwig on the Rhine-promenade, and he shook both my hands. Later in the evening went to the Kaiser . . . found him very pleased, especially about his sons.

To-day, all decisions take place in Prussia. One is a little anxious on account of the enormous preponderance of power there. I still cannot bring myself to be glad and rejoice over our victory.

So many have confidence in me, and I can do so little. I must keep myself in the background so long as the army has solely conquest of the French in view, and no one can see what the end will be.

COBLENZ,
August 28th.

I am greatly distressed by the affair in Heligoland. It seems to me that they let themselves be surprised.

Our light fighting forces are not sufficient for such skirmishes. If things go on thus, they'll soon be wiped out. The English will enclose us in a great circle of mines; then our fleet will be "bottled." It is awful for me! I have always been opposed to a great bottling-up of the fleet, but against the opinion of Pohl, Müller, the Kaiser, and Bethmann there was nothing to be done. Of course the decision lies with Ingenohl, to whom one can't dictate the details. In this acute phase I don't naturally overlook the general situation. The army marches from victory to victory, and for it the situation, above all, becomes increasingly difficult.

In my opinion, one is apt to underrate the obstinacy of the Englishman—a considerable factor in the outcome of the war on land, in spite of our victories over the English army.

Coblenz,
August 29th.

I can scarcely hope that Wolf,[1] will be among the few saved from the *Mainz;* circumstances were too little in his favour. The small cruisers were too reckless, and, apart from that, I feel very bitterly that my advice did not appear to be properly followed. One doesn't send them forward into the battle with armed forces unless one has his ships and torpedoes close behind. But I won't remonstrate, as I can't review the events that preceded it. This much seems

[1] His son, officer on the *Mainz.*

to me certain, that our fleet gains nothing by pushing out to battle. The superiority of the English in light forces is so tremendously great that any loss in this direction signifies nothing to them.

COBLENZ,
August 30th.

Words fail me at the news of Wolf's rescue. We must all make sacrifices for our country. But what made it so especially bitter for me was that the sacrifice of our small cruisers seemed the unnecessary consequence of mistaken tactical operations. It is truly too early to pass judgment, but has Ingenohl the genius of a conqueror? Pohl certainly hasn't. But, in these things, I can't approach the Kaiser in an analogy of what the military staff, aided by Müller, has effected. Obviously the Kaiser is prejudiced against me. Apropos of which I feel, where these questions are concerned, that I have more in my little finger than Pohl in his whole anatomy: Bethmann continually tried to influence Pohl not to coop up the fleet. That would be the death of our navy, after the war. He and the whole bunch of diplomats want to sell the fleet at the conclusion of the peace with England; that is the whole secret.

LUXEMBURG,
September 2nd.

The great wave of offensive that rolled over France and Belgium, like a cylinder, begins to roll more slowly. Just now I hear that the Austrians' main army has

been unhappily beaten (this quite *entre nous*). That is very bad, on account of the reactionary effect on the Balkans. At supreme headquarters they are beside themselves with rage. The English are making gigantic efforts and are, in my opinion, the most dangerous adversary. I believe the province of Prussia is meanwhile safe. There we have at present excellent leaders, after lopping off the short arm we began with. I have got from Longwy packets of dum-dum bullets taken as proof that the French War Office ordered them to be used.

LUXEMBURG,
September 3rd.

It is the Kaiser who puts the brake on Ingenohl. He won't run any risks with the fleet. He will hold back till the winter, if not altogether.

Hardships are now telling heavily; one doesn't know how long it may be before France will collapse, and then we shouldn't have to contend with the double or rather fourfold enemy. Added to that comes the winter. For the rest, I have made some use of being here, while the Admiralty have been doing excellent work. The whole expedition got under way by Usedom and Schröder, and now I am looking for a third.

During the time of sharp distress which is sure to set in after the war, the navy, to my mind, will be lost if we haven't deeds of some sort to point to. The small skirmishes are nothing, and through ill-success don't count. Here in grand headquarters we

are more cut off than you would credit, getting only scanty news of the whole army. Our position, through force of circumstances, is extremely unpleasant. No one comes to me, of his own accord, because they are too afraid of me. Audiences here are not practicable. I can't accuse Pohl. The analogy with Moltke operates too forcibly . . . it would be put down to forwardness. I must reserve that for quite big resolves.

LUXEMBURG,
September 4th.

I mistrust the Chancellor and his set. I am convinced that they are not equal to the stupendous times; and just as their policy could not prevent the war, it will bring about a lamentable peace. The English, low and brutal as a nation, are to be esteemed as individuals. In a hundred years they have created a morality for themselves in which they believe. Everything is just, good, and even religious that brings grist to their mill. All the peoples of the earth are their squeezable objective, according to God's decree—

LUXEMBURG,
October 5th.

People seem to be somewhat victory-mad in Berlin, as I gather from various letters. As yet, we haven't by any means won, regarding the war as a whole. We ought therefore to be modest, as only through tenacity of purpose can we be preserved for ultimate victory. The hardest days are yet to come. England is hound-

ing the whole world upon us, and the unspeakable fabric of lies publishes our so-called defeats and our infamy throughout the globe. We have nothing to set against this.

LUXEMBURG,
September 6th.

There is so much to be done, and yet I do nothing. I have too little influence for my task. Even the interest of Müller is sheer water-soup. He is soon absorbed again by Bethmann, and Pohl is in the same category. All that creates for me a very melancholy position. For the army the situation is difficult. We haven't succeeded in entrapping and taking prisoner vast masses of troops; in consequence the French army, by means of their network of railways, are constantly taking up new positions. The English make huge efforts and have again landed 40,000 to 60,000 men in Northern France. It is to be hoped that Maubeuge will soon fall, and the army corps held up there be set free, which is very necessary. An army corps already means a great deal. In spite of all promises, the Turks have not struck a blow. Feeling in Scandianvia is increasingly unfavourable. Italy is burning to be at our throats. The diplomatic conduct of affairs is slackening the bridle, as heretofore. If Bethmann stays, everything is sure to be bungled.

I'll now go at once to the Chancellor and try to get a new enterprise inaugurated.

LUXEMBURG,
September 7th.

I am always anxious about our diplomats, who on one side are indifferent to mighty historic events, and through their feebleness render the English ever stronger, and are duped by their bluff.

The Austrians' condition is very critical. Here in the West, fighting is going on along the whole front. Fortunately, as we succeeded in getting wind yesterday evening of the French order for attack to-day, and were able to meet it with counter-commands, I hope that we may conquer. But we must do more than conquer, for Italy can hardly be kept off Austria. It is now certain that England is bringing over great numbers of troops from Asia. But all would go well if we had an *Iron* Chancellor and an "*old* Kaiser."

LUXEMBURG,
August 9th.

The weapon of lies and calumny which England is using against us is really a frightful one. The whole world is being hounded on to us. I dined to-day with His Majesty: our conversation naturally turned on the Paasche affair.[1] I think it is rather precipitate; but perhaps to be greeted as calling the tune for the navy. On the other hand, it will put the army out of tune. Yesterday too I conversed for a long time with Oldenburg, on the question of peace, and on the same subject to-day, with the Crown Prince's civil

[1] Compare below, September 10th.

adjutant (Maltzahn). Hold out, hold out is the only solution for us . . . though hard to fulfil . . .

LUXEMBURG,
September 9th.

Things are not going at all well with the Austrians, and that keeps all the Balkan States back. We too, in the west, are faced with a great crisis. The troops that we are now sending to the extreme right wing have assuredly come too late. We have over-estimated the value of our first successes. The French have withdrawn according to plan, and now advance in enormous masses and with a great show, while our troops are exhausted from marching. But they will, all the same, hold on, till the next new batches come up, whereas the French will be withdrawing their new batches. The navy has no success to record. If the fleet would only come into action, and no blunders were made, it would fight brilliantly. The drivel about peace is immeasurably absurd. Even if we wanted peace with England we should be obliged to open our jaws as wide as possible. We don't understand this sort of bluff. Read the statement made by Goschen about the last conversations with Bethmann and Jagow.

LUXEMBURG,
September 10th.

The Chancellor has naturally his suspicions about me, in regard to the Paasche affair (introduction of an urgency bill for the strengthening of the fleet),

that is to say, at least, he thinks that I suggested it. He is especially furious at Reventlow's article, and even here thunders at the Admiralty. Things don't go forward in Turkey. A part of the blame lies at the door of those who cause the Turks to be anxious with regard to the Dardanelles, which is to me incomprehensible. In the Balkans the opinion prevails that the Austrians will suffer a great defeat. If this comes to pass, we may abandon all the hopes which we have built on this corner of Europe and on Islam. The English send out strong reinforcements, and the progress of our army has of late come to a standstill. Notwithstanding, I hope for ultimate victory here. We have been rather belated in learning the intentions of the French. The movements of our troops no longer take place exactly at the right time. The French have a dense net of railways behind them. Our brave soldiers have mostly to march on foot. The French get all their intelligence through the Eiffel Tower. We, on the contrary, get almost none in this direction.

LUXEMBURG,
September 11th.

The war will not last such a short time as many think. England, which is the cause of all the evil, sees that she is fighting to maintain her position in the world. In the month of August she sacrificed 40 per cent. of her trade and commerce; that, in a certain way, is effective. Women in England are said to be especially angry with us, and ride straddle-

legged through the streets to recruit for the army. To-day I have been with Hopmann by motor to a forest and took a beautiful walk, lovely scenery, deep valleys. The badly forested woods have on that account a very picturesque appearance. On the whole, Luxemburg seems to me to be a slovenly country. The unrelaxed exertion of every faculty and military service in Germany have borne brilliant fruit. That makes one reflect on liberal squabbles about militarism, Zabern affairs, etc. How silly all that was. The Kaiser must be credited with having done one good thing . . . he didn't allow the military machine to go to sleep, in spite of the Imperial Chancellor.

LUXEMBURG,
September 12th.

It just amounts to this, that we could never get England to agree to a peace in which we dared hold ourselves as blameless. This talk of a separate peace is impossible. If we don't want to be trodden under foot, and wiped out as a great world-power, there remains no choice for us but to hold on and see it through. Therefore we mustn't let ourselves be misled into a peace *à la* Bethmann, Harnack, and so on, or openly hanker after such a thing, for this feeble flummery only strengthens England in the hope, *Germaniam esse delendam.*

I haven't at all given up my idea of concentration in the North Sea. I was only of opinion that a battle in the North Sea with any hope of success was hardly

possible with the, at that time, planned and now carried out preliminaries of Prince Henry and the *Moltke's* and *Tann's* need of repairs. Then we should have been forced to conceal this intention, according to plan, for ten days, and in that time go forward towards the east with large forces and fanfare in order to produce a lasting effect. Had we, in carrying out the plan, actually come in collision with the Russian fleet, at least equal in strength to ours, we should have sustained losses, even in a victorious encounter. Every loss against Russia would be a pity, because my view is that we must stake all against England. Therefore: only with superior forces against Russia. . . . But I will not speak yet.

LUXEMBURG,
September 13th.

The battle on our right wing has not been going well, but on the left wing von Bülow's guards advanced victoriously. The French generalissimo seems to be a fine fellow. It would have been better, people think in this place, if we had let the troops have time to breathe a little before going on. Meanwhile, despite the withdrawal of our troops, there is to be a renewal of the attack to-day, that is, on the side of the English, and there is some anxiety about reinforcements arriving in time. We were too confident of victory, and regarded persistently the retreat of the English and French as defeats. At present spirits are damped, especially in the camp here, because the

Austrians have not held Lemberg and are crying out for help. The new victory scored by Hindenburg in East Prussia does not apparently extend so far. I set little value on Polish aid. Although the Guards were victorious on their wing, on the last day of the battle, they had to leave their wounded behind lying on the field.

The Admiralty has worked famously, but this kind of assistance is little noticed or appreciated. The Kaiser endeavours to suppress his own excitement, but he is, from a military point of view, out of it. When one thinks of 1870, the dignity, the seriousness of the men, clear as crystal, who could both weigh and dare, and finally of the "Iron" one—the victory-crazed Berlin of to-day, when all is at stake, can only fill one with anxious fears. The immense moral exaltation with which our whole nation took up the perfidious brutal gauntlet alone gives us cause to feel truly proud, and to look forward to a decent peace. But it is too soon to talk of what form peace will take.

LUXEMBURG,
September 14th.

Here we are still more or less in painful anxiety (*entre nous*). It is said that the 1st Army wanted the victory for themselves, and hadn't sufficiently considered the whole . . . thus the gap arose into which the English with great skill wedged themselves, and up to now there has been no successful closing of the gap. Great masses of troops are, moreover, in forma-

tion in the rear of the 1st Army. The French have the whole of their railways at their disposal and seem to be shifting all their men towards their left wing. Our troops must run vigorously, the poor fellows! Whether we can make good is now the great question. Now, too, the heads of the army are beginning to find out that the significance of England as an opponent has been underrated. Pohl is ghastly. There isn't a scrap of nerve in the man. If our dear God doesn't help the navy, gloomy indeed is the outlook.

LUXEMBURG,
September 15th.

Here the crisis is by no means over; it will explain itself to you by the changes in the High Command, of which I may not write. Perhaps I am wrong, but I wouldn't have chosen Falkenhayn, for all his qualifications. The 1st Army is engaged in heavy fighting, and the reinforcements expected from all quarters don't arrive any longer in the nick of time. All this is pretty fatal, and the victory-delirium of the Berlin press, which has always been repugnant to me, is now more than ever repulsive. Plittenberg has clearly announced to the Kaiser the fact that in many regiments of guards whole companies have only about 50 men fit, against 300 fallen out. Pohl is very secretive in his attitude towards me, perpetually suppresses Ingenohl, which isn't really a bit necessary. He is thick with Müller, with the Kaiser and Bethmann, so that I am, as it were, quite out of it.

LUXEMBURG,
September 16th.

To-day is, at all events, a crisis-day of the first order. But even if we should win, our position, all the same, has become bad. We ought to do more than just win battles, if we are to come out of this war with a prospect of rebuilding Germany. I have been asking myself for years whether things can go well, with such business representatives as we have in high places? Yesterday I had a visit from the General Director of the Dillinger huts, Herr Wemlig, who, at the time, was responsible for the decision about acquiring the iron-works in Tsingtao. An energetic man, a specimen of what the people's grit can produce, compare him with the "green"[1] fellows that take up a long table.

These folks didn't stop Austria making war on Serbia in July. The joke "Serbia has nothing to do with us" was too fatuous.

The Austrians continue to cry aloud for help.

LUXEMBURG,
September 18th.

Just as I was on the point of writing to you, Hintze suddenly appeared. I regard him as the one safeguard against a certain clique. Whether the Kaiser, in this extraordinarily perilous hour for our fatherland, will be inspired to take him on, is another question. Nothing decisive has taken place here, but

[1] Official uniform of the Diplomatic Corps.

defeat has been averted. Things are essentially better than they were a few days back. If we ever actually win, we haven't succeeded in smashing the French army, and that is what we want. Italy is ready to spring, and Roumania, at the same time, has become very dubious. May God help us! England goes on arming mightily, though of course her *élite* army sticks fast now in the great mud-slough. It is said they have done it on purpose so that they will be safe in retreat.

LUXEMBURG,
September 19th.

My hopes of Hintze have, alas! ended in smoke. "*They*" have been successful in shunting the dangerous man. The Kaiser may after all be right. It would have involved a great upset, and as this must have happened, it is better to avoid it. Hintze's view was that the lack of leadership in the ruling classes, either in victory or defeat, must forfeit them their position, and that immediate big concessions (such as Social Democrats being appointed to high posts, and reform of the franchise in Prussia) was the only means by which the gigantic upheaval in the nation could be guided into some sort of equable channel. With regard to the starting of the whole war, and the simultaneous collapse of his colleagues, he was exceedingly wrathful. He is very clever. The battle is still raging. An improvement is expected in two or three days. The Austrians are wretchedly de-

spondent, and we shall now have to take the matter in hand.

LUXEMBURG,
September 20th.

Owing to the collapse here, of which I have given you a hint, and which is already known everywhere in Berlin, the frightful sacrifices have been in vain, bringing no real success, and Germany is in a most dangerous position. All is to be attributed to the last act of the old childish pantomime nearing its end. Perhaps the people, and the power of the people, will save us. It is all up now with the rule of caste and class. Victory or defeat, we shall get pure democracy.

LUXEMBURG,
September 21st.

How hard this war is, above everything the great, great danger that all the blood may have flowed for nothing. Roumania's attitude must now be definitely defined; should she strike against us, I can scarcely dare say what'll happen. America, at heart, is on the side of England, and supplying France with munitions and war material. In the dearth of munitions there lies danger for us. The French are splendidly led, which unfortunately is not the case with us. Physically, Moltke is a wreck. Don't breathe a word of it to anyone, but our position has become as perilous as it is because Austria is so completely disheartened. She is said to have still 500,000 men in Galicia out of the 800,000 that marched out. Here in the

west the position for us has become very difficult. I wouldn't write this to you on my own authority, if I hadn't yesterday talked to a Berlin man (a motor-driver), who knew everything and said that all Berlin knew. The English send over masses of troops, but the quality of the latter must certainly be getting poorer and poorer. It's not that I think that we shall be positively beaten here, though that is not absolutely impossible. Our men in themselves are superior to the French, but the French have their railways to back them and can perpetually arrange new movements, and added to this there's our terrific loss in officers: in Augusta Regiment, fifty-three out of sixty, and in the 1st regiment of guards only a few less, and so on. It is the much-caricatured lieutenant who does most of the work in the higher command. He is not to be replaced.

LUXEMBURG,
September 22nd.

My position here continues abominable, for I am quite superfluous. Meanwhile there is a lull in this frightful war, though things are not going well with us on the whole. Our chief plan of campaign having manifestly failed, we stand facing a superior force which has all the local advantages on its side and without doubt is capitally led. America is really against us. I have just heard the news that 100,000 Japanese have landed in Shantung, which demonstrates great designs on the part of Japan, and our

colonies haven't a chance now. That is to me especially awful. If we had scored great victories here at once, our position would be different. That is what I hoped when in Coblenz I adopted the point of view that we oughtn't to give up Tsingtao without a fight. So far as I can see, our fleet won't come out.

LUXEMBURG,
September 23rd.

Hopes of the Balkans are now nearly extinguished. We are already glad that Roumania will give us fourteen days before declaring war. All depends now on whether the great battles now pending bring us any genuine success during the next few days. The Russians are turning out vast hosts. One wonders whether poor East Prussia will have to endure another Muscovite occupation?

To-day the forts south of Verdun have been bombarded; their fall would make a breach which is of the utmost importance. It is so difficult to judge whether England is suffering economically more than we are. Up till now, as far as one can tell, the hitherto opposite assumption has actually been the case.

LUXEMBURG,
September 24th.

I shall tender my resignation immediately after the war. The reconstruction of the navy, if it comes to that, must be undertaken by someone else. Pohl, Müller, the Chancellor, and the Kaiser have kept

back the fleet. I believe now that they won't let off a single gun, and the work of my life ends with a nought.

LUXEMBURG,
September 25th.

The general opinion is that the system of the Wilhelmstrasse must cease. The war will certainly not come to an end before the New Year. Thus we have a rigorous winter campaign in front of us. The great struggle *here* is imminent and probably the military decision will come then. We can't count, any more, on a Sedan or Metz, as, through mistakes on our side, the brilliant drive has not met with the success desired. In Galicia, the renewal of the struggle is calculated to begin about October 1st. The Russians are said now to have an almost superstitious terror of Hindenburg. May he have further success in good fortune over there. The Minister of War yesterday declared that the danger of Eastern East Prussia being again invaded by hordes had disappeared, because 70,00 Russian corpses so poisoned the atmosphere that one couldn't breathe. Yesterday we had an exciting night. The news came that the English had broken through the Beit. Whereupon Prince Henry, with two squadrons and all the ammunition, had been caught. I had implored Pohl and his subs. most urgently to adopt different methods, but in vain. I was beside myself, and couldn't sleep the whole night. In the morning, early, the news turned out to be false,

but the English are plotting something of the kind and we know nothing about it; add to that the impassiveness of our fleet, which the longer it lasts, the more useless it becomes. The submarine successes counteract much. Thank God that we have more submarines for offensive purposes than England—it is to be hoped that they'll meet with still greater success.

LUXEMBURG,
September 26th.

We—that is to say, the Court and Admiralty—still remain here. One can't be sufficiently certain what the outcome of the great forthcoming combats is going to be, to move. While the withdrawal of Grand Headquarters is not feasible, advances on our side are made at only a moderate pace. Though we have need to advance, as time is not operating on our behalf. It is very curious how we have come to be the least beloved people on the face of the earth. Everyone wants us to be laid low. The Crown Prince has just 'phoned to me congratulations on U-boat 9, and then went on to converse about affairs in general, about Bethmann, Jagow, the beginning of the war, etc. I reserved my opinion, but did say this much, that we have the strength to hold out, and must, if the rising of our nation doesn't go against the Government. The war, in the end, is a life-and-death struggle with England. I hear from a gentleman who comes from the Front, that in the Army an idea has leaked through

that the command is beginning to throw up the sponge. One is getting serious, . . . estimates the enemy very highly, and our first wonderful *élan* is failing. But nothing is known of this in the nation at large, happily. The Luxemburgers are getting restive at our staying on, they imagine things must be looking bad at the Front. It seems that the jackals, Roumanians and Italians, want to wait and see how the cat jumps here before coming in. Our hopes of Turkey, according to a letter from Usedom, seem to have come utterly to nothing. Then think of the lazy Austrians, for whom we are shedding our blood. It's not pleasant. But the whole business was inevitable. An expanding Germany suited nobody's game.

LUXEMBURG,
September 27th.

With regard to the Rohrbach matter (Rohrbach and Jäcky had asked for an interview, in order to work a better way of distributing information among representatives of the neutral press), I have finally advised the gentlemen not to come. For me to receive a visit arouses the suspicion of the whole clique, and I am correspondingly picked to pieces. I have, however, taken the matter in hand here, and shall effect a change. But under Bethmann, nothing can be much better. When once the German people are behind anything there's a catastrophe. The riddle of the future is how this war will end. How can a respectable peace be made by the men who so stupidly let

themselves be driven into it, the men who were blind to signs in the heavens, and prepared for nothing? That seems to me the positive quadrangle in the circle. We feed together in the same hall, but never exchange a word with each other.

CHARLEVILLE,
September 28th.

The Kaiser said good-bye to Luxemburg two days ago, and the postponement of main Headquarters' departure was giving cause for remark. Therefore at one o'clock to-day we were off. Three hours' journey here via Sedan. Everywhere, where the fighting had been going on there were villages in ruins, not a human creature to be seen. Sedan, which once interested me so deeply, I scarcely noticed, so overmastering is the spirit of the present. The navy is quartered here at No. 1 Place Carnot, in the house of a rich captain of industry, or rather in his widow's. The man was old and she was young. The house, just as it was, with everything in it, had been deserted by the family. Only the porter and the housekeeper had stayed. Their *unique peur* was of the soldiers. We are, naturally, regarded as robbers, murderers, and ravagers of women. We pacified them thoroughly and assured them that we weren't Russians. But it is nevertheless a strange feeling to take possession so completely, for a time, of a foreign well-to-do household. Downstairs are the salons, *salle à manger,* billiard-rooms, and so on. On the second floor noth-

ing but extraordinarily arranged bedrooms, I believe for the children of the first marriage, now grown-up. I was first quartered in the *Chambre à coucher de Madame;* but as it faced north, I exchanged it for a more retired room that had a little sun. Madame's room was furnished in Renaissance style, good pictures, chest of drawers full of things. A dressing-room and lavatory attached, but nowhere a bath—very remarkable. Now I have a room which one of the daughters had occupied. Besides the chief piece of furniture, a French bed, there's a night-stool upholstered with cushions apparently for decency's sake. The whole main Quarters is now scattered; General Staff, War Minister, Chancellor and officials, all live by themselves and I believe cater for themselves. I have a feeling that not anyone will have us. That is what makes my position so horrible.

I have worked like a horse all my life for the navy, and now that it has come to the breaking point I am not allowed to influence its use. I willingly admit that the position of the navy is extremely difficult, but neither Pohl nor Ingenohl have the necessary genius. The first onrush of our army had cost an enormous amount of bloodshed and brought in proportionately very small results. "The silent pressure of sea-power" will grow greater with time. The small successes of our fleet do not deceive me. The cruisers out at sea must one after the other perish for lack of coal provisions and revictualling ports. England has even prevailed with Switzerland to issue a ban on

our exports and Holland likewise, and added to that there exists in Holland an aversion towards us; Sweden and Norway are in many ways suffering the small miseries of war. Norwegian newspapers, for instance, are not allowed now to be sent to England. If we don't get a bit of extra-good luck soon, the situation will be very grave. We had this good luck once in our hands. But it seems Moltke was wrongly advised.

CHARLEVILLE,
September 29th.

This place is not beautiful. Were I to compare it with any German town of the same size, the comparison would be greatly in favour of ours. . . . Houses, streets, squares—somewhat dingy. And although the Place Carnot is evidently inhabited by well-to-do bourgeois families, it looks like a very badly kept parade ground. Nowhere is a grass lawn to be seen, or any sort of town beautification. The chief square, Place Ducale, is much prettier in the pictures than in reality. As far as possible, I am not going to let myself be depressed; but the whole attitude of Bethmann and company does, somehow, depress—more profoundly, it is true, in present circumstances, than ever. Ingenohl *asks,* only, of course, to get a declining answer from Pohl and the Kaiser. In this state of things the only remedy for danger at the helm is acting —if one knows how to act rightly.

Mere asking doesn't satisfy me at all.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 1st.

Here things go neither forwards nor backwards; and time, into the bargain, is not on our side. Even in the east we are not altogether pulling it off. The world is ranged against us, even the neutrals. The gigantic hopes of August are flown. The Kaiser and Bethmann are not holding out. The former appears, forsooth, to have given permission to Bethmann to go begging! Italy is on the prowl! I am of no earthly use here; I haven't since we were here, as a matter of fact, seen the Kaiser. How can the finish be any good, after such a start. In the last few decades an incalculable capital has been squandered; somewhere and somehow the bank must break. Our people are sound, and have proved it. After the war there will be great changes. We shall all rub our eyes. The suppression of *Vorwärts* is a piece of crass stupidity.

Mediation would have had a better effect on the more reasonable socialists. . . . So is the divine peace for which have we such a burning need torn in pieces. The French will perceive now the folly of their Revanche idea . . . *"travailler pour l'Angleterre."* I am impressed, in spite of everything, with the bull-dog energy which England is now displaying.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 2nd.

To-day I have written a really desperate letter to Capelle. Pohl has to-day gone off to Ingenohl with

the instructions that he is now to put out and do something. Ingenohl is no leader; else he wouldn't ask leave. Now he's got the answer. Pohl shields himself behind the Kaiser, Müller is weak and vacillating. My position is simply vile. I am quite isolated. . . . The end I see before me is not what my work has deserved. Only the poorer classes have hung on here. All the rest have stampeded in terror of the "Barbarians." Twice a day I take an hour's walk; mostly in the streets, for the town is very straggly. Early this morning I saw the gigantic work of repairs in progress on the Maas Bridge here and the tunnel. The capability and the resource of our people are magnificent. Therein exists our one hope. But those who hold the ruins are unspeakable. Man to man the French are not to be compared with our soldiers, but they are excellently led. They have better guns than we have, and know how to manage them considerably better, also they are very skilled in making use of the country. There is no saying beforehand how and when the present situation will end. . . . Great leaders have not arisen with us, except in the East, where since the settlement of early differences, Hindenburg and his Chief of Staff, Ludendorff, are rendering brilliant services. Pray God that in the next few days they may again meet with success. I am not at all satisfied with the fleet, but I am utterly powerless, for though I must be consulted, I accomplish nothing, and you know "the absent ones are always wrong."

CHARLEVILLE,
October 3rd.

Just now Admiral von Müller came to call on me here. He was not in agreement with me about our naval war policy. The Foreign Office is behind this question. Müller is evidently now completely in their hands. It goes to this length, that he has let himself even in what concerns Hintze be talked over absolutely. "He had been convinced by persons who knew that Hintze had been guilty of big blunders and discourtesies, and he must, in short, go on at once." When I made closer inquiries, out came incredible quite distorted banalities—the whole Müller of 1911! This afternoon I went by motor to see a blockade fort, which had been frightfully battered by our shells. The garrison of the fort very soon couldn't hold out. It must certainly have been beyond human endurance. The shells pierced and shattered everything and made the fort a perfect hell. The commander couldn't keep his men in hand, and, in despair over it, shot himself. A company of the Landwehr buried him in the part of the wood glacis which hadn't been entirely ignited and set up on the grave a pretty cross. On it is the inscription:

"Here rests the Captain of the Fort,——because he would not desert the citadel entrusted to him." And then something like the following:

"In diesem Kreuz aus Holze schlicht, ehrt der deutsche soldat den Feind als Ritter seiner Pflicht."

("In this cross carved out of wood, the German

soldier honours his enemy as a knight who did his duty.")

CHARLEVILLE,
October 4th.

This war is really the greatest insanity in which white races have ever been engaged. We are exterminating each other on the continent, in order that England may get the profits. Moreover, perfidious Albion is ready to indict us before the whole world as the guilty party. One almost loses one's faith in goodness. Of course we are not without blame. That is chiefly the fault of our leaders; but this braggadocio was always sickening, and especially hateful to me. And the wrong of it all is, as Capelle quite rightly wrote to me recently, that *I* am now counted among the Chauvinists and Jingoes. Antwerp is not likely to hold out much longer. For the rest there are two lines of fortifications that run across France, opposed diametrically, up till the present *partie remise.* Whether the new command is any good is a pronouncement which can't be made yet. Before it was undoubtedly very bad, and that fact is gradually leaking out. The biggest reputation is that of Ludendorff, Hindenburg's Chief-of-Staff. But he has a very heavy task before him, as our brothers-in-arms in Galicia are extremely cautious. Napoleon III was right when he said:

" On ne s'allie pas avec un cadavre."

CHARLEVILLE,
October 6th.

Pohl has just come back from Wilhelmshaven, having got Ingenohl's consent to nothing being done. The submarine danger, and the idea generally, to preserve the fleet, outweigh everything else. Pohl has got hold of the childish notion that the fleet must be doubled after the war, and Bethmann shares this opinion, while the highest probability points to its being reversed, politically, financially, and also with regard to the submarines. Neither have I much faith in the wild expectations of a rising in our favour on the part of Indians and Mussulmans. Harnack's answer to the English savants is good, I think; but we and the English don't understand each other any more, and never have understood each other since we wouldn't go on owning that they were the chosen people of Israel, and all other nations merely lemons for them to squeeze. To-day I had a long letter from Ballin in answer to one from me. He is working hard for a better understanding with England, and demands of me an attempt to come to a naval agreement with Churchill—that is to say, in other words, to abandon our independent attitude towards England and vassal states, after the French pattern. If the *liebe Herr Gott* doesn't make a special intercession it may really come to that. The ground is preparing for this new departure, and I am the wicked scoundrel of the war. I'll know how to behave myself in the rôle. . . .

CHARLEVILLE,
October 7th.

A storm has burst in Tsingtao. The Japanese are sending more troops there. It is significant that the English are taking a share in the conquest of Tsingtao, with 1,000 native regiments. They have lost now all sense of blood relationship between us. Japanese, Indians, Niggers, all are being goaded on to fight us. The latest acquisition are the Portuguese. Büchsel's criticism of our command, in the cruiser-skirmish on the 28th, 1914, is also mine. I dare, however, hardly hint at it; according to Müller all has been splendid. Just now Captain Mann was here bringing messages from General von Schröder. Our sailors acquitted themselves very well at Antwerp. Pohl has come back a smaller and at the same time bigger man than ever. I am not at all delighted at the resignation and want of initiative in the fleet. Once more we have been lulled into inaction, for me a horrible thought, and I am powerless.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 8th.

I came home the day before yesterday from seeing the Kaiser, quite depressed. Nearly an hour's lecture on a political conversation with a bourgeois, with whom he lodged in St. Quentin, and to whom he laid bare his whole political faith. Picture to yourself the Kaiser's grandfather in his position. Then little details about the battle-field. . . . What will happen

if his nerves break down? That has not been foreseen in the calculation of events.

What makes my position so difficult it is impossible to tell in a letter. I have guaranteed that Germany should have a place in the world. For this she was bound to have a fleet. To build this fleet took a long time, but it is now in a considerable measure ready, so that it should be able to take part in a world-war. During the last two years it has been well known to us and the English that the submarine must play a more prominent rôle in the North Sea than heretofore. That is part of the technical development. It was clear to me even last winter that we would have to change probably the basis of the law for the navy. But for that years would be required (by the by, we are stronger in submarines than England). After recent events, the significance of the submarine [1] to-day will be overrated. I don't want to have our fleet start for England straight away and fight there. But I do believe it to be absolutely wrong policy that Ingenohl should be given the command "to risk nothing" against superior forces. That means, in other words, that our fleet is to be embalmed, and then talk about peace. It requires in addition a man of resolute power to make anything of our fleet, and with all his good qualities Ingenohl isn't that.

Added to that comes the political side of the question. As you know from Tarasp, we have, from a diplomatic point of view, in an irresponsible manner

[1] What is meant, is against warships.

"drifted" into this war. With England for a year and longer we'd been playing a see-saw game, which finally incurred for us the enmity of the world; and Bethmann was up in the clouds. Therefore he fell a cropper out of them when England's ambassador left Berlin. Later a hundred pens will be set in motion to maintain that the breach with England wouldn't have come about if the "dangerous man" hadn't been present, and now there's his work lying idle. It didn't rest with me, but with our people.

I can hardly imagine how we can come out of this war with honour, after the frightful mistakes made by our generals during August. The one hope is in holding out, and in being able to hold out . . . but for that we want men of iron, and when one sees the men around the Kaiser and Bethmann, hope sinks. After the war will come, of course, mighty changes at home. You know, don't you, how often I have said a catastrophe was bound to come, though one couldn't say when and how. One saw it creeping on; couldn't alter anything, and in the end was accused of being the delinquent. That is why my presence here is so hard. Many have counted on me, and I can't alter things, and the little that I could have done in the maritime department has been forbidden because they didn't want to lose their plaything. For like everything else, this was only play. Japanese are not coming over, that report was rubbish—but 20,000 Indians are in Marseilles, and amidst the acclamation of the populace marched up the Rue Cannebière. In Havre,

20,000 Canadians; Portuguese may be coming too. That isn't bad, but the general combination of British cold-bloodedness with fiery French blood is very effective on the battle-field.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 9th.

His Majesty has just summoned me for a discussion. I met him in the street with his entourage. The discussion consisted of being told that Antwerp had fallen. Afterwards I had to go to supper. The Kaiser was naturally in the rosiest humour. General von Beseler *pour le merité*. "Our cousins on the other side of the Channel will be angry now we can go ahead." The cardinal point, *i.e.* that the garrison could have moved on northwards, seemed not to trouble him in the least. Prince Eitel Fritz was there; he had been thrown from his horse, and had a few days' sick leave; simple and jolly as usual. On the whole, however, he saw the position was serious, as indeed it is. It is almost painful to hear that the Russians are once again converging on East Prussia. This apparent success, together with Antwerp, made us all inwardly anxious.

I forgot to tell you that yesterday morning I was in Sedan, and explored the battle-field there pretty thoroughly. We stood on the famous Knoll, whence the old Kaiser watched the panorama of the battle, I believe, near Frenois; then we went to the house at Donchéry where Bismarck and Napoleon met. The

house is still inhabited by the same woman, who at that time was a young woman of twenty-seven. She makes a kind of business of showing the room in which Bismarck negotiated with Napoleon. Three *Napoleon d'ors* given her by *l'Empereur* are framed. It is a diminutive room, poorly furnished; a narrow staircase leads up to it. We went on to Bezeille; there in the house of the *dernière cartouch* is a small local museum. A French battle-painter has made the event a subject for a great picture, which was also exhibited in Berlin (although it depicted the Germans as monsters). Through Sedan itself, and from there to the statue of General Marguerite and his cavalry; a great block of marble, on which is a figure of "La France" with lowered flag, on the front side. The moment when the cavalry suddenly see and plunge into a quarry . . . rather theatrical, but a piece of real art. It was a wonderful October day. How I should have once enjoyed it all; now the grim reality of the present and the distress of our country have swept away all interest in those great times. Then I was a young lieutenant; we were anchored for six months at Schillia Reede, till the ice drove us inland. We had only three ships, and there were eight farther out; in spite of that we twice attempted to achieve something. Now I am a man of sixty-five; I sit here and our great fleet is again lying in port. It is sad for me.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 10th.

As many as there were places for were asked to supper. Before the soup this time sack was poured out. The Kaiser made a speech in which he first of all praised the officers and men in the ranks, then Moltke for having conceived the plan, and Beseler who carried it out, then three cheers! It had a curious effect on those present, the cracking up of Moltke more than the others at this juncture! It is so mistaken not to invalid him home as a heart and mental patient, which as a matter of fact he is; so the poison of slanderous rumour percolates through the army, and one asks "Who is leading us?" The retreat of the Belgian Army is valued at its true significance by all thoughtful people. A submarine saw it, and thinking that the soldiers were merely refugees, didn't fire. It is open to question whether the 50,000 Belgians and English wouldn't have been better in the Antwerp Mouse-hole than now free for army uses. Nevertheless the fall of Antwerp has made our country's position easier. From East Prussia too, where things were very anxious yesterday, excellent news has come in to-day. But still the thought of how we are to come out of this war with honour and without irreparable losses is always weighing on us. My staff doctor, a reliable witness, said recently that all three of the Cabinet chiefs blindly acquiesced in everything the Kaiser said. The whole entourage takes its lead from that. [The Kaiser said, for instance, to Bethmann

and Jagow, that they, the diplomats, must never lose what the German sword had won, embarrassed smiles on the part of both.] Admiral von Müller now too deplores the order which the Kaiser sent by Pohl to Ingenohl, which practically is an order for the whole fleet to be capsuled, and moreover with openings the employment of which would be objectless and dangerous. This is a historic document, and I must sit with folded hands, and do nothing to save the navy from an unheard-of scandal. If only the War Minister was a man with whom one could reason; but I have no one except Hopmann, who thinks the same as I do, and who has told me that at last it was coming to the knowledge of men under Pohl.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 11th.

Letter of the 9th with copy, by the purser of the *Mainz,* just come to hand. My poor boy, who felt so strongly about the blunders in our leadership on August 28th! But it is doubtful whether he would suffer less now if he saw how his father's work was being turned to no purpose. I had a letter from Capelle yesterday, which at several points I was not in sympathy with. He too has misunderstood me. These great, sweeping questions are too difficult to deal with in letters, without verbal discussion. He of course is certain of this much, that I must still stick it out here. And that's what I intend to do, as the mental atmosphere of Berlin would be scarcely more

congenial. Capelle thinks I am, in a sort of way, here, *"the fleet in being."*

The fall of Antwerp and the method of conquest have made an impression abroad. It is indeed undeniable that the German people are making a powerful demonstration of their strength—here in the West pitted against three nations, in the East against the great Slav wave, and besides slimy Austria to be snatched out of the furnace. To-day comes the news that Turkey will strike. I shan't believe it, though, till the guns begin to crackle. We've been disappointed too often.

God grant the poor troops in the trenches good weather; the French, of course, will stand the rain worse. A remarkable war this! From the —— over Paris, as far as the Channel, a long improvised chain of fortresses on both sides. On the other side a fortification built by a hundred million of workers in twelve days, without any great losses. Aeroplanes, motors, etc., play an undreamed-of part, as does machinery altogether. Bridges and tunnels, the building of which in other conditions would have taken years, are produced in about a fortnight. When one sees this colossal industry on the part of our people, the belief is forced on one that they can never be beaten. Only the " silent pressure of sea-power " is the critical element. As Herr von Hydebrand said in 1911, in the Reichstag, " England is the enemy."

It is maddening to see how those fellows go on enjoying their sport while through them Europe is being rent asunder.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 13th.

Just a few lines. I am going to-day to Brussels and Antwerp by motor, and intend, to-morrow or the day after, to come back here. The spirit in main Headquarters is again somewhat *exalté*. Owing to the fall of Antwerp and the repulse of the Russians in East Prussia, in spite of their great numerical superiority, Capelle says that Bethmann, having begun it, must drain the dirty soup to the dregs. That's not my view. Only a younger, more iron-hearted man can be in at the finish. Bethmann would make it sheer wish-wash . . . then we shall see where the wave breaks.

BRUSSELS,
October 13th.

The journey here was very fatiguing, immediately after lunch, no stopping for rest, and five hours' journey with interruptions. I shall have no time to see anything of Brussels, for to-morrow early I go on to Antwerp, to discuss matters with General Schröder, and find out his wishes. Uncertainty still prevails here, as to where the Belgian army is hiding; probably it has gone to Holland and England in mufti.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 14th.

To-day after a journey of five hours, with some delays, via Namur up the Maas, returned from Brussels. Invited this evening to sup with His Majesty, probably because of submarine success in Gulf of Finland. The son of Count Berkheim did very well

there, a pity the enemy wasn't England. My journey was very arduous, and not quite so satisfactory as I perhaps hoped. Before we got to Brussels we passed Charleroi, where Napoleon had his headquarters in 1815, before the Battle of Ligny, now it's a monstrous manufacturing town with hideous dwellings, a small handful of the Landsturm quartered in the middle of it. After Charleroi we passed the whole battle-field of Belle Alliance, adorned with many monuments. The marvellous changes of a hundred years presented themselves vividly before my mental eye. In Brussels, the millionaire town, we found an excited population, and only at the Palais de Justice a concentration of German troops to the amount of 5,000, among them a naval division. One of Field-marshal von der Goltz's staff told me that at the time when it was uncertain whether we should besiege Antwerp or the Belgian troops at Brussels, a notability said to him, "*Mais, monsieur, vous êtés les prisonniers.*" After the fall of Antwerp the tone naturally became rather different. Goltz was a little disturbed, because in Lille and the north great masses of troops had been seen. But, as I've just heard, the danger has been averted. Here it is still up and down, hopes one day, fears the next.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 15th.

They must be very base souls who credit me with wanting to drive the fleet out to sea from egotistical

motives (who's at the bottom of that rumour it would be interesting for me to find out). I couldn't do anything more fatuous than goad the fleet on to fighting and action, if I was under the impression that it wouldn't answer. But because I believe in its success, and because I see in its impassiveness a degeneration of its morale, I have urged activity. It's not necessary to offer decisive battle, but to develop an activity which will cause the English uneasiness and give the torpedo boats a chance of attacking in the night. The present conduct of the war tends to the killing of initiative and to general stagnation. Through it the fleet, even after the war, will be ruined. But enough of this. I would willingly resign, if I did not cherish such grave fears for the fate of Germany. They won't crush us, but Germany's position in the world hangs on a thread. It really is extraordinary how very unpopular we are, and how completely our whole Diplomatic Service has gone to pieces. A too ghastly incompetence in every branch of it is coming to light. But I'll tell you a little more about Antwerp. I traced out the tactics of our naval brigade, which fought most bravely. The old sea-dog, Schröder, did his part splendidly, with much distinction and gallantry. Row followed row of trenches, forts all along the line terribly riddled. The giant city of Antwerp almost empty; and here and there despairing figures to be seen, a curious sight. The naval brigade was a little sweated by the army, but there was excuse for that, it must be admitted, in the dire necessity of the

position. The marine artillery brigade, hastily recruited from the coastguards, and never even organized, had to man the trenches. The naval division had a very hard task in defending a long line, without any artillery except our gunboats. Schröder came and welcomed me very heartily. It was a real pleasure to meet and chat with him, after having to put up with Pohl for so long. I found myself envying Schröder, not only his optimism, but his post. He stands with his undertakings clearly outlined before him, and needn't look to right or left. Whether the brigade, as he hopes, will go on to score as important successes at Bruges, Ostend, and perhaps Calais, cannot yet be foreseen, but at any rate it'll get on the nerves of the English.

Churchill was in Antwerp two days before it surrendered, tearing all over the place in his private car, urging stubborn resistance to the last. When he saw the affair was going awry he drove off, and is said to be now in France. Schröder next took me over Antwerp. Nearly all the endless wharves and warehouses showed nothing but German firms. Antwerp has gorged herself full of Germany. Shall we keep the place, I wonder. Afterwards I dined with Schröder and his staff and then drove to the Walchem fort, which had been awfully battered with shells. Spent evening in Brussels. Yesterday at nine in the morning off via Namur, Gwen, Dinant, Revin, etc., back here . . . scarcely anything but ruins to be seen, but just here and there places that hadn't been

touched. Went to the Kaiser last night. Nothing special. Everybody in good spirits and building great hopes on the reserves.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 16th.

Here we are awaiting with tension news of further events in the north of France. One is partly dubious of any striking success. The English have wriggled themselves out towards the coast, and are far on northwards. Depression seems to prevail at French headquarters, and the black troops are said to associate badly with the white. The fall of Antwerp has been rather a blow to the London public. For the rest, the fabrication of lies there goes on and has surpassed all imaginable bounds.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 17th.

No one is at all sure here whether the new drive the army is now making will lead to complete success. It is about the last trump card we have to play here. If it doesn't come off, what Jagow said to me to-day about the end of the war is likely to prove correct. He thought that the war would stagnate, and slowly fall asleep from sheer general exhaustion. That would be bad for us. The conclusion of a peace which wouldn't satisfy the German people is what I fear under present leadership.

I don't believe for a moment that our people will

be overthrown. A nation that has shown the brilliant qualities which Germany has during this war cannot be crushed. But whether the inheritance we are to leave to our children will be a rich one, is another question. Anyhow the methods of our Government must, either by its own free-will or by force, be altered. I was reading the other day some extracts from the *Socialistischen Monatschrifften,* one of the intimate organs of the Social Democrats, that I greatly enjoyed. Social democracy has grasped the fact that its international ideal is a Utopia, in this world, where the elements are so strongly antagonistic. They have also, extraordinary to say, grasped that not Russia but England is the enemy that has to be dealt with in this war, England who won't tolerate at any price an expanding Germany. All would be well if we had any real political leadership. It is questionable, however, whether the new command in the army is not too cautious after the discouraging beginning; it's not for me to judge, but it may fall short. Inwardly one has that impression. What is really good is that, at least in the east, we have first-rate men holding the Russian colossus at bay. They'll destroy it. If only our allies were not Austrians, but Prussians! Our submarines are doing their work magnificently. But of course we must be prepared for mishaps even here.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 18th,

Of course, in what concerns the fruits of victory we shall not, owing to faulty leadership, make the most

of them. Before all, and that is the worst part of it, we haven't any victory that has brought us fruits to make use of. We had the game in our hands and played it wrong. I would rather not express myself thereon in writing, although the truth, or what is more, the facts, have long ago leaked out everywhere. Nothing remains now but to hold out, as long as possible, and let come what may. Only by endurance can we hope to get a tolerable peace. In any case a mighty disappointment is in store for our people, when one considers the gigantic effort and bloody sacrifices they have made. If we don't take the reins in hand in domestic politics now, we shall be forced afterwards to reforms which will exceed the bounds of prudence. That can, with the present system, only be done by the Chancellor. Our system of government did very well for the old Kaiser and Bismarck, but it doesn't do for average mediocrities. The constitution and leadership consists of two heads alone, which is a mistake in method. But when the two heads are below the average, it is extremely bad. The idea of ruling the Prussian administration won't work. Suppose in the other case that I came forward with reforms, everyone would say, with justice, what did it matter to me? My character would be blackened by all around the Kaiser, my position would be more difficult than ever, and I should achieve nothing. Things must then go on from bad to worse. If the war slowly stagnates and goes to sleep, as Jagow thinks, it will be all up with Germany's place in the

world. We are so encompassed with the hate of our enemy, and of the neutrals, with the exception perhaps of Sweden and German Switzerland. Serbia, the cause of the war, too, of course! We are regarded by the whole world as the instigators. Just read a brochure that's appeared in Holland, which propagates a world-combine against the unpolished, everywhere-disturbing parvenu German, after the Peace! Though it reeks with hate, there is some truth in it. In England the war is being carried on with bull-dog pertinacity and passionate energy. We too are doing the same, but how shall we get our teeth into the bull-dog's flanks with seven other dogs at our throats? Our navy is gallant and daring, but our leadership atrocious. Yesterday morning I had a severe set-to with Pohl because I regarded the sending out of four torpedo boats as too nonsensical. This morning early, news came that these had been blown up.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 19th.

To-day the Chancellor summoned me to a consultation about possible peace conditions. I put restraint on myself to the utmost when I said that we must first have a complete victory before one could give any opinion on the subject. But I hope soon to tell you more by word of mouth. I intend going to Kiel and Wilhelmshaven and via Berlin back here.

According to reports just received, things seem to

be going favourably here in the west. The English, it appears, made a very poorly arranged attack on the German troops stationed to the north of Lille, and were repulsed with heavy losses; the grand final decision is expected here in a few days. May God grant us a complete victory. We are in bitter need of it. England remains the dangerous enemy. I recommend you to read the article by Carl Peters, with which I perfectly agree as far as his proposal to treat severely the English at the present time in Germany. As for our conduct of the war at sea, I am from beginning to end out of patience with it. The slaughter of the four torpedo boat crews came about through sheer shortsighted observation. We run risks at places where nothing but luck could save us from disaster, and risk nothing where in all probability success is possible. The lack of initiative on our side in the navy infects the other initiative. Müller, however, still excuses everything.

CHARLEVILLE,
October 20th.

Yesterday evening with the Kaiser, who is not a bit altered, and who won't let you talk seriously to him, though I tried all I could.

HAMBURG,
October 25th.

Emden Müller has again snapped up six ships, and the English are raging; the *Karlsruhe* thirteen as well. Ballin isn't glad, because he says it will make the

English still more furious. He may be right; but all the same I am delighted. I can't help it.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 9th.

You will have heard from Treves of my burst of joy over the victorious combat off the coast of Chile. Unfortunately it was followed closely by grief for the fall of Tsingtao. A work of nineteen years is thereby wiped out. I have had very kind telegrams from several quarters, from the President of the Reichstag, also the Duke Johann Albrecht has expressed his warmest sympathy. Yesterday, lecture from His Majesty on contentment. Nothing has happened here. One hopes and hopes in the west. I have an instinctive feeling that this drop by drop progress won't bring much to a head. This morning a long conference with Jagow. He has reasons for opposing changes in embassy at Rome.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 13th.

I have suffered and suffer still more because our whole policy of recent years has been crass futility, and the conduct of the Empire—apart from His Majesty here—has so totally missed fire and does still. I should be glad if I had any personal confidence in the present leadership of the army. Of course I can't sit in judgment, but I wish I could see the end. Here there is nothing to report, except that everything has come to a standstill. In the east twenty-nine German

and Austrian corps are ranged against forty-three Russian. Our brothers-in-arms number, of course, about half. The Turks are crying out already for munitions and we haven't any to spare, quite apart from the fact that Roumania no longer allows us transit. My attempt to get Bülow instead of Flotow to Rome hasn't succeeded with von Jagow, on account of all kinds of objections. After the war I shall join the Socialists and look for lamp-posts, a whole heap. For there is a hydra-headed monster to be scotched before things can be any better. I am nervous now about surprises in the North Sea and can't make any impression on Pohl.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 14th.

Here the abominable weather continues. The poor boys in the dugouts! I believe that now even the *influential* people have given up hope that we shall break through in the north. We shall not, therefore, get to Calais, which my second naval division has been striving after. It is *partie remise,* and so it will remain. But don't talk about it. Both sides lie facing each other in the north, absolutely exhausted. We have lost here about 100,000 men. We have no new corps wherewith to replace them. Things are not so bad in the east, but we shall have to send reinforcements there too, because the Austrians are undependable. I was talking to Colonel von Marschall, of the Cabinet, just now. He, like most of us here, is of

opinion that the extent of our other losses hasn't yet come out; and that England can't put up as much counter-thrust as we can. That may be true, but *partie remise* is bad, if the fleet can't help.

Yesterday came most unfavourable news from the Black Sea—a Turkish muntion ship torpedoed. And the Turks have no munitions. Who will hold out the longest?

That is the question.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 15th.

I have just come from a consultation with the Minister of War. He was this time much more amiable and less erratic. The reason for this is to be found in the *ensemble* of the situation, of which he too sees the fearful gravity. The quality of the English troops has, nevertheless, declined rapidly. This much is evident, that in the west a complete deadlock has set in, and every little advance is only made possible by an enormous loss of blood. Added thereto, the blockade weighs so heavily on the neutrals that we are in need of many necessary articles, such as saltpetre (powder), motor-tires, and so on. He seemed to look for the way out more through France than Russia. But I think that quite unfeasible, as Russia and France are allied in the same boat. Here the weather continues rough and atrocious; this morning it snowed heavily. The Kaiser's mood and that of his entourage very depressed. I am anxious about

the fleet; England is waiting for better weather. Moreover it is impossible to talk to Pohl.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 17th.

Thank God we have, in Hindenburg and Ludendorff, really great leaders in the east, and that will guard us against the worst. Here in the west, unfortunately, it is not to the same extent the case. I had a talk yesterday with the very able and sensible S——, who could pronounce as his carefully weighed judgment that which I can only dare claim to have as a faint impression. An aide-de-camp has lately come here of whom S—— thinks a great deal, but these hints are quite confidential, and perhaps later may be of value to me. In August, unheard-of mistakes were made; no organization in office of the General Staff; lost their heads later, which, as is now universally recognized here, was the cause of the unnecessary and mistaken retreat. From this has arisen finally the present situation, out of which really good leaders could rescue us, as the men in the ranks are first-rate. We must wait for the big "Berthas" till more powder is forthcoming. From the beginning of the campaign we have supplied the army with powder by contract, likewise commissariat, ordnance, and other materials.

This evening I was invited with Admiral von Pohl to His Majesty. We shall be getting Iron Crosses, which I for one don't at all want to wear. According to my appraisement of our command in the North

Sea, and our part in Councils of War, honours are equally divided between T—— U—— and E——.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 18th.

As I expected, I was "crossed" yesterday, and moreover in the first class! I take no pleasure in what, under other circumstances, I might be proud of. I could not refrain from telling His Majesty that it wasn't at all deserved, whereupon His Majesty remarked that all of us here in Charleville hadn't deserved it. I thought with Caprivi, "Orders come with age like childish diseases." In 1870 how I envied everyone who had really earned the cross, and now I don't care to wear it, for I believe our fleet will do nothing, and if it does, will fail. I look with tension to the east; may a brilliant success take place there. It would assuredly be annihilating, if we weren't so inferior there numerically; all we can hope for is a pretty decisive victory. I don't see things in quite such a gloomy light yet as L——. If only the Head was different! The nation is splendid, and not less so troops and ships. The ships, when they have been allowed to act on their own, have distinguished themselves with *éclat,* but the command *à la* August 28th, and court councils of war . . . Shocking!

The English are now in terror of Zeppelins, perhaps not without reason. I contend here wherever I go for the standpoint of "war to the knife," but I am not in favour of "frightfulness." To-day I

have used my influence to get an old English admiral who was interned sent to Italy. Also single bombs from flying machines are wrong; they are odious when they hit and kill an old woman, and one gets used to them. If one could set fire to London in thirty places, then what in a small way is odious would retire before something fine and powerful.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 19th.

There is a point on which we must be clear. Does England mean war to the knife against us? If we arrive at the conviction that she is unscrupulously bent on our extermination, we must also use the knife unsparingly towards her, or we should be guilty of a crime against our nation, and the future.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 21st.

An American journalist paid me a visit, introduced by Erzberger; then followed the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Tisza. The American was rather dissatisfied with his Government. He thought they would have to pay for the fall of Tsingtao. He pointed out that our diplomats have no conception of the power of the press, and equally little of trans-Atlantic affairs. Count Tisza was quite confident, only regretted that we hadn't sent a few more corps to Poland. I must admit, too, that if we are going to stick here, as it appears, we might easily have spared

a few corps and ensured the collapse of the Russian army.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 22nd.

The folks in the Wilhelmstrasse will find it difficult to make me the scapegoat, for too many people know what the policy of the Foreign Office was in July . . . insane gliding into war. Almost more dangerous are those with Pohl at their head, who try to attribute the inaction of our fleet to the question of type of ships and technique, because the Kaiser would be at the back of them. But we must leave all this to God's ordering. No one can deprive me of the consciousness of having in my fifty years of service, especially during the last eighteen years, done my duty.

I should like to tell U—— once more how urgent I think the necessity of a commercial treaty with Austria. I have been trying to put it into effect since Luxemburg. We must go on working for it, without any hesitation. Count Tisza is an impressive personality, while Count Berchtold, whose acquaintance I made in Berlin, bears the stamp of mediocrity on his forehead.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 23d.

Count Spee is running short of munitions; he can scarcely hold out in a long struggle; it would be a miracle if he broke through. The whole of America

is aiding and abetting England and France, and if we get a little coal there is a great outcry. It's contemptible injustice towards us, but we could settle the matter if it weren't for the Cabinet administration. This evening I again was with His Majesty.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 25th.

"Nothing new from Paris." All eyes fixed with tense interest on the east. The position there can't be reviewed certainly, because Hindenburg has cut off Headquarters. The decision may be delayed for a few days, till the Pomeranians attack. But any check for us is unlikely, while a disaster for the Russians is quite within the bounds of possibility. The Russians, of course, are gathering forces from all directions. May our bold general keep all the luck on his side. I can't possibly be satisfied with the doings of our navy. Naturally, I don't mean the individual ships; they have, as yet, done their duty when they've had the chance . . . but the best opportunities have been missed, and if the fleet did come into action now, matters would be bungled. I have strongly recommended T—— to Müller, as his Chief of Staff, and another for him. But Pohl I can't get rid of here. We don't talk of the service together—in fact, I am out of it.

CHARLEVILLE,
November 26h.

To-day breakfast with His Majesty. I took the opportunity of saying that we must look the fact in

the face of England stopping at nothing, and in consequence take eventually strong measures, *i.e.* the submarine blockade. His Majesty agreed. Yesterday evening Havenstein (Reichs Bank) and Helfferich (Deutsche Bank) were there at supper with Pohl. The conversation then turned on the same subject, and it seems His Majesty expressed himself as opposed to it, supported by Valentine and Treutler (both weak, half-hearted creatures). To-day, after breakfast, Valentine was not altogether against it. His Majesty, Valentine, and I were in a corner; he maintained, of course, that it was an extreme measure.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 22nd.

Now scribbling can be resumed. At Frankfort we had to change carriages and at Metz get out. From Metz a through train. When the porter called out "Charleville! all change!" I didn't feel particularly glad. The escapade of our fleet to the north-west must be inquired into more closely before a judgment can be pronounced. Probably no firm hand will be taken against Pohl if against lesser people, so that any great alteration is not to be attained.

The difficulty lies chiefly in the Kaiser having agreed to the main principle and holding to it. I am among the old set, quite alone in my opinion. The necessity of keeping Flanders later appears to be making way forcibly.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 23rd.

I had an opportunity of talking to His Majesty about the North Sea. He had already discussed it with the Crown Prince, who was present, and according to whose reports it was a wonder that the big ships hadn't met with disaster, they had come across so many mines and submarines. He was displeased that the torpedo boats hadn't attacked. One can't, however, judge of the whole situation without studying the losses, and these must be forthcoming. One feels that the needful stimulus was not there, but it can't be called a defeat. I had an opportunity of mentioning Flanders and was pleased to find that on the whole he, His Majesty, shared my opinion.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 24th.

This morning I expounded once more to Müller my views on our naval strategy, which he didn't contradict.

With regard to the last enterprise a few more questions were put in commission by the Kaiser, and these must wait. All energetic going forward is again frustrated.

I have just come from the Christmas festivities in the temporary chapel, which was very prettily decorated. The gifts set out on long tables, at which the soldiers sat, a slightly raised platform with carpet for His Majesty and the officers; in front of it the crib, very charmingly arranged. Then came Göns

in grey uniform, and after, monster Christmas trees all lit up. To begin with three verses were sung, "*Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe.*" Then Göns gave an address, short and to the point. Plessen, in the name of the army, thanked the Kaiser, and called for three cheers. H. M. replied in a few stirring words, and then went about among the ranks, was very gay and genial. Every man stood up in his place and returned thanks, which I did too. To wind up with, three more strophes.

"*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht.*" Altogether a very dignified and impressive little ceremony.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 25th.

Comments that reach me from many sides in Germany depress me even more profoundly. The strategy for which the Chancellor is responsible renders me practically powerless, unless it is in questions which don't exist in war.

The High Command of the army is composed of the General Staff and the Admirals' Staff, and are directly under the Kaiser. The latter wishes the war at sea to be carried on exactly as it is and no otherwise. In reward for the excursion of the fleet to England, Pohl has got the Iron Cross of the first class. That characterizes the situation. It isn't any use to me that I know the principle to be wrong, and the person honoured not a suitable one, for I've no foundation to go on to prove I am right, quite apart

from the fact that the essential materials are withheld from me. Roon, in 1870, found himself in the same position, also recently Falkenhayn. The last saw disaster coming and could not do anything at the end of August. Stein in 1813 was an absolutely free agent, though, moreover, formally in the service of the Czar. Scharnhorst was also powerless in face of the events of 1813, till von Blücher became his Chief of Staff. Blücher, however, stood at the head of the army.

In what concerns the conduct of the war I have no expert knowledge of naval organization, and therefore for me to set the pace in the Cabinet would only procure me an ignominious failure. But mere empty interviews with His Majesty during my sojourn here would make things more intolerable than they now are. Even if I had any idea of recommending myself as Admiral of the Fleet, His Majesty wouldn't take me. I talked the matter over with Plessen from his side of the question. The proposal, that is to say the offer, must come from His Majesty, and not from me. I would not, however, keep my own counsel where his Majesty is concerned, and not say what I think now any more than when I took over the Admiralty in 1897, and that was a contradiction as well as a self-recommendation.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 26th.

Many thanks for your interesting long letter, which I haven't at all properly answered yet. (Excitement

on the part of America with regard to the rumoured invitation to Roosevelt to visit Grand Headquarters.) Our leading caste is far too poker-backed for any such skilful move on the chess-board as inviting Roosevelt. There is really no truth in the report of anything so unusual happening in our diplomacy.

L. sent me a letter from an American concerning the reasons why the feeling in America and especially in the press is so unfavourable to us. An essential part of the blame he attributed to the studied tactlessness of our treatment of American journalists. He compared the bearing, so urbane, of English, Russian, and French diplomats, on the same high social level with our stiff aristocratic reserve. The dispatching out there of such a windbag as Dernburg was again a blunder in the opposite direction; intellectual, talented litterateurs of the highest rank and other prominent publicists would have been effective. All must, with us, be ordered from the top downwards; available forces are not liquefied, on the contrary every individual initiative is suppressed; things have gone on thus for years in the Corps Consulaire. The same methods are adopted against myself. I am convinced that my discussion with Wiegand can only be politically useful; in spite of that the whole pack would have been let loose on me if Zimmermann hadn't made light of what I said. All the same, I am not sure yet whether they won't, via Pohl, who is putty in their hands, make it unpleasant for me.

Our successes in Russia can't have been very great,

as no guns were taken. Serbia is almost entirely evacuated by the Austrians, and our hopes of getting munitions, etc., through to Constantinople have diminished to vanishing point. The Roumanians permit Russia transit for everything and us nothing. That is a bad lookout. Nevertheless I build great hopes on Hindenburg, and the strength of our army isn't in the least shaken. Their holding out can be reckoned on.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 28th.

To-day we have the most abominable Charleville weather, rain, wind, and cold, and into the bargain there is the odious impossibility for me of taking active part in the great affair, not even to the extent of advising the Admiralty Staff. It is immeasurably hard for me to contain myself here. The only chance left me, if it is left, is to have a voice on the peace-terms, but that is so far off, and even then I should be sorely handicapped.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 29th.

If Hindenburg doesn't after all indeed help us out, the prospect is black indeed. Here everything is at a deadlock, and unluckily we are short of munitions; that is bad, and due to extraordinary remissness on the part of the War Ministry, which obviously was ruled by bureaucratic niggardliness. Since the beginning of the war we have given up to the army our immense hospital stores and munition bases, but of course they are not sufficient.

CHARLEVILLE,
December 31st.

The terrible year 1914 goes to roost, and what may the year 1915 bring us in hopes and disappointments? I cannot help cherishing the fear that at the conclusion of peace our people, after their gigantic effort and achievement, will be as disappointed with the results as they were a hundred years ago. I shall be content, for my part, if we retain the ability, better still the possibility, of again working ourselves to the top. So long as I live, we shall be on short commons, I mean not us alone, but the whole nation.

I read to-day in *The Daily News,* of December 12th, an article headed "Lord Fisher and von Tirpitz," which of course contained many errors, but from which could be gathered, as it will be from history, that I am the initiator of our naval war strategy. I created the fleet, but have had scarcely anything to say in its use, a detestable position for me. It is clear, too, that von Müller's scheme (his method of dispositions) was doomed in advance to bankruptcy, else the fleet would have accomplished great things. One has proof of that in all the isolated actions in which our ships have been engaged.

1915

CHARLEVILLE,
January 1st.

Church to-day. Sermon rather too rhetorical, and suggestive of little to my mind. H. M. greeted me graciously, and afterwards there was a march past

on the filthy road to Hiron, of Landwehr and Landstürmer troops, and the staff-guard, I should think about 5,000 men. Then headquarters, and officers' corps formation and the Kaiser chatting a little with different groups. New Year's congratulations from Pohl to Müller: "continue to protect me during the coming year" (naturally he means against *me!*).

I've more still to say about U.'s letter. But he is mistaken. There's a strong wall round the Kaiser, through which I cannot penetrate, quite apart from the fact that I have no longer the nerve for a great combat. Change in the administration of the Cabinet can only be inaugurated after some great catastrophe, and from that may God deliver Germany. After peace has come, the spirits will of course be let loose.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 2nd.

The bastion round the Kaiser is at the present moment more than ever impenetrable. It is just the Kaiser's peculiarity that he won't come to any resolve, or bear any responsibility. He is reported to have said to Müller several times, "Now the fleet must really do something," but he can't be induced to resolve what it is to do, and he simply evades me when I tackle and harangue him, which I never lose an opportunity of doing. Müller bears a heavy responsibility towards our country, but I fancy that he is little aware of it. He only backs up the Kaiser in clinging to the servile Pohl. No influence that I can

exercise is any good against all this, even in the case of a great misfortune.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 3rd.

I share your faith in our people, but the danger lies near that we may have to pass through a phase of Revolution instead of Evolution.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 4th.

Pohl has come round to my fundamental view of our war strategy. So I have hopes that things may now go better. Only what is wanted is to act at the minute what you think at the minute, etc., and here it's not a matter of minutes, but of five months. If the Kaiser wasn't directly influenced by Müller, we should now be bound to go ahead. I believe the pressure of events is too strong—the fleet must advance. May the great God aid it. In favourable circumstances the decision may rest with it, but I won't count on that. I will be content if it contributed something towards the peace for which we fight. Pin-pricks aren't enough.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 5th.

This morning I have effected something in regard to our new enterprise and at last Pohl is at one with me. The thing is now to be worked according to my instructions drawn up at Coblenz, and before that at

Berlin. In Berlin, however, I had reckoned on Pohl acting on his own initiative, and in Coblenz urged it. Characteristic of Müller and company's administrations; the proposals take the form of a memorandum. That, if I were Pohl, I simply wouldn't do, *i.e.* hold discourses, and leave memorandums where the Kaiser is concerned. Otherwise Müller and friends plus Bethmann will take the decision into their hands, but I am counting on the position becoming urgent all round.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 6th.

I have just passed an hour with the Grand Duke of Baden. The Chancellor has asked me in writing to give him my views with regard to the future of Belgium, from my own standpoint as well as from the standpoint of Germany's future, in the form of a pamphlet. I am agreeable to this, because I can now freely give my views without being suspected of plotting against the Chancellor. Capelle has been commissioned to-day to draw up a memorandum and send it here. I shall, myself, go to Brussels and travel through Flanders to study the question on the spot, also sound Krupp.

From Italy bad news; she is out to rob, and wants the Trentino, but *l'appétit vieut* for Roumania as well.

O blessed Hindenburg, help us soon, we are in sore need of it! Still munitions are lacking. We are losing men every day and can't shoot back.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 9th.

Müller holding preliminary conversations with Bethmann; a quite hair-raising circumstance, I think. Ingenohl might have more scope with advantage, but I have no longer confidence in him. I have had a pretty sharp explanation with Müller, who was very irate over it, while I remained calm. The written *acquiescence* from Pohl, in *acquiescence* to *my ideas,* is really rather a joke! He greets *my acquiescence* with *satisfaction,* after he and Müller have combated those ideas for five months. But enough of this. My hopes are small. Ilse's New Year's wish is right. To see my life's work turned to no account, as it is my conviction that it will be, is indeed dreadfully hard to bear. There were chances a while back, but only *chances.* On December 16th Ingenohl had the fate of Germany in the palm of his hand. I boil with inward emotion whenever I think of it.

A Roumanian naval officer educated amongst us sends greetings in a letter to his old comrades, and writes that he has often spoken up for Germany . . . all no use. In a few weeks war will be declared on Austria and Italy will follow suit. I believe that already. Ultimatum threats have been hurled forth. Wrath against our allies great among our troops in the East. They can't get them to advance. The plunge, which I and Westerkamp induced Pohl to entertain, has practically come to nothing. Doubtless Müller and Bethmann have shunted the matter, and instructed

the Kaiser beforehand. Instead, concessions are to be made, half-measures arranged which can be of little use . . . and in addition entail great danger. It is terrible! Of course they can't sweep my "counsel" off the face of the earth, and its effects are likely to last. But not nearly enough has been made of this one order; it could only have been actually effective when we had got to Calais. From Flanders it would be much more difficult to undertake, for besides this minor action the fleet would have to strike, and that at the time could not be guaranteed. I build expectations now on Hopmann in order to operate further. It must be confessed, of course, that at this moment, when Roumania and Italy are standing on the brink, any check for Ingenohl would be perilous, while here one continues to reckon on Hindenburg against Russia, who is only temporarily held up by this swine's weather.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 12th.

I was reading yesterday in the *Frankfürter Zeitung* an extract from a speech by Lord Rosebery at Dalkeith. "We have two facts of great importance to face: the first is, that the British nation would be for ever defeated if it did not fight to the last shilling and the last man; the second, that the German nation as the greatest military power in the world could never lift up its head again if once beaten." These words seem to me to characterize the situation exactly, and from this situation one sees no way out.

Yesterday evening at the Kaiser's, where an officer of Hindenburg's General Staff had arrived with a letter for His Majesty. Shall we go on scoring mere local succeesses as of old? What frightful casualties there have been without much gain. The officer related that the Russians will go through fire and water for Nicholas Nikolajewisch, and that so far they have only had good guns to contend against; that is to say, in other words, the power of the Russian army is not yet broken. He asked the Kaiser what the fleet was going to do? The Kaiser was heard to answer, England was letting herself be misled all the time; but that's not the case. The new management is in reality, thanks to the influence of W. and Z., doing better than I could have dared to hope after the omissions of Pohl. Ingenohl has now so much scope that he must go forward. Let us hope that God Almighty doesn't punish those who vacillate! My nagging has at last been some good. Naturally I can't create a leader. Another officer of the General Staff has come here from Serbia, Lieutenant-Colonel Heutsch, and has told the story of the Austrian collapse. He praised the Serbian army, and was of opinion that Roumania and Italy would not keep out much longer, hence Hindenburg's last energetic push. Shall we ever come to firm resolution? I believe that before this the decision would have been different had we not set so much store by local succeseses. Lieutenant-Colonel Heutsch praised the Austrian navy on the Danube; in Poland, on the other hand (Admiral Hauss), com-

pletely hypnotized by the Italian notion . . . Lissa and Tegethoff of blessed memory! Communications between Joffre and French firmly established. The possibility that we shall send German troops to Serbia is unluckily not on the *tapis*. The prestige of Austria in the Balkans seems finally to be on the decline. The forces, German and Hungarian, not Croatians, excellent; they prefer, however, to be led by us, as their own officers are disheartened. The Czech troops are doubtful.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 14th.

Great political developments are in progress; it almost appears as if we should have more or less to drop Austria, or by force to tear pieces off her body as fodder for the vultures who prey around her.

Hopmann has to-day told me a good deal about the fleet that isn't at all reassuring. Unless some radical cure is not found soon, nothing will be done, and we expect to beat England to-day! All their thoughts (the Admirals'), instead of being fixed on that, are centred on technique, which leaves much to be decided in every direction and hinders them from accomplishing anything. But the exploits of submarines and aircraft are made a lot of, otherwise the German people might be out of temper at the inactivity of the fleet. The fleet is there, but a Tegethoff is lacking. It is too lamentable. Added thereto, our general position is extremely serious, despite the small success at

Soissons, which brought General von L. the order *pour le mérite* forthwith. This little affair has demonstrated for that matter the fact that in a well-calculated storming attack the French can't put up any resistance to our troops. It was the Brandenburgers' 5th Division, so famous in 1870.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 15th.

People here who know what is going on are becoming grave. Big munitions are failing, and can't be manufactured fast enough. I should be compelled to decide on doing more, although that want would he felt at once, if Ingenohl were a leader. Now he wants to send two squadrons, one after the other, to Kiel for necessary re-equipments. It is too unbelievable, and in doing it he'll be more than ever "bottled up." A fleet is just as bad a defensive weapon as cavalry, if not more so. All the advantage in the North Sea goes to those who hold the initiative. One has only to think in this connection of the *Emden* and the *Karlsruhe*. This is a war of frittered-away opportunities at sea, and on land too.

The peace will be a bad one, if we don't get Antwerp and Flanders, therein lies the contrary compensation for all our other losses in the world. I have just had a visit from Monsieur and Madame G., who offered to get me news of Wolf, through a relation of theirs in England. I thanked them warmly, but it wasn't necessary. Both, Madame in particular, were

very affable. We talked politics a little. Richelieu and Colbert were right, Louis XIV had made the greatest political blunders and was guilty of the ultimate downfall of France. Napoleon I was right in his root-principle, and even now if one ignored the frontier dispute the interests of France and Germany were solidly united, etc., etc. He didn't excuse himself, and Madame thought that was quite right, but now we had to fight, and in that I agreed with her. It is a pity that the European nations are so little ruled by intellect, England excepted, and she has no soul. Whether she has miscalculated her strength remains to be seen. All the neutrals grovel to her power. There is nothing for us to do but rely on ourselves. A mighty, glorious fabric are we, with a hydra-head.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 16th.

Capelle telegraphed recently that I ought to stay here. Letter followed. The situation seems to be very urgent. It seems somehow that the Home Office has very much miscalculated in its estimate the supply of corn. What if it now comes to flight along the whole line? Ballin now wants, all of a sudden, energetic conduct of the war at sea, after having hitherto cried out with the other faction, "Anything rather than provoke the enemy."

I am glad that Retzmann has come back from a task that was not based on probability, but on moonshine. I had a presentiment that the thing would go

awry like the torpedo boats. The tone among the neutrals is increasingly worse. England's bluff is stupendous.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 17th.

Why Capelle should be so urgently set on my staying here is still not quite clear to me (he has telegraphed twice). I can hardly imagine that the corn question is so serious, and I am unable to think of anything else. Anyhow I am here till January 29th, when my Flanders tour comes off. I have almost given up all hope with regard to Ingenohl and the fleet. There is, though, still the submarine war left. We must, before everything, get England on toast, else we shall make a peace that will destroy our position as a world-power, and Germany will be exporting men again, instead of wares. U.'s efforts haven't succeeded, I believe, in lashing up F., so that H. gets supplies for military inclining eastward. Conrad again reconnoitring. If Hindenburg is sufficiently successful to come to terms with Russia, which I have always thought would be the best thing, it may react on the situation here.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 19th.

Yesterday evening with the Kaiser. The conversation turned on the submarines. Treutler and Valentine against action. Italy would have a pretext for attack. I said pretty plainly that if we didn't get

our knife into the English we should only fritter away the sympathy of neutrals still more, and accomplish nothing. H. M. won't. He must first get a clearer political vision, etc. The upshot of it all was, in the opinion of K., that peace was to be made, even if it was a rotten peace.

The Kaiser, as usual, related how victory was always a matter of nerves. Langenback (Plessen's brother-in-law) said when he heard that Port Arthur had fallen, that the Russians had surrendered twenty-four hours too soon, or they would have conquered. I remarked to His Majesty that was quite correct; in a wider sense there was a twenty-four hours in which to decide this war. His Majesty was silent. K. v. B. has enthusiastically seconded, in a letter to Bethmann. I have now tried to work him up to see that, as the press must be mute, a dozen or more prominent leaders of industry and finance should meet together and lay at the foot of the throne their collaborated opinion of what alone will prove a lasting peace for Germany. But I couldn't make him see it.

If he were asked, they would all be at one in wanting much more (I, for instance), and it might look as if the Chancellor was to be overthrown, and that wouldn't do. I endeavoured in vain to make it clear to him that it was a historical duty for him and his colleagues to make some announcement of the kind before it was too late; it would merely give stability to the Chancellor, who was oscillating in murky uncertainty. "Yes, he would think it over, etc." Such

a lack of strong personality in the upper ranks, at a time when the nation's achievement is so colossal, is astounding, and demonstrates a great blot on our statecraft, which will avenge itself bitterly, sooner or later. I am more and more astonished that the Kaiser still treats me well; he does indeed work against me behind my back and prevents my getting on my way, but for me to "go" would excite too much remark. The fleet could act if it liked, but T. is devoid of intuition and from here nothing can be done.

BRUSSELS,
January 20th.

We started on our journey at 10 o'clock, this time without hindrances, via Charleroi. The population a good deal calmer than they were the first time. I am to meet Bissing and B. here, and to-morrow go on to Bruges. The situation as a whole is gradually becoming clear. Above all now, I stake my hopes on Hindenburg. We must first of all beat Russia and then come to some arrangement with her, if Austria isn't shattered.

Chestnut trees in Southern Tyrol handed over to Italy in order to pacify her. Austria must find breathing space towards the southeast. Bulgaria must be a little diverted so as to fasten her to Austria. In return Austria must resign what is only harmful to her and out of keeping with her historic mission.

Russia coming out of the affair with honour will be able to give us certain little useful rights, such as

a bit of Lithuania. That would be nice, but not absolutely necessary. Bare cash is not desirable, and we don't want more of Poland than we've got. Thus everything must be directed now to making it possible for Hindenburg to conclude a peace with Russia. Roumania to have nothing, that is a foregone conclusion to appease Hungary. Then Hindenburg must be endowed with absolute power, and we must all do our bit to promote the end, by attacking England as much as we can. Have conversed with Bissing and arrived at a complete understanding perhaps. I've gained very valuable support.

BRUGES,
January 22nd.

The more I see of the governments of the Empire under the Kaiser and the Chancellor, the more my hopes dwindle. To-day I've been in Antwerp, had B. to breakfast and afterwards talked to General H. Before I expressed an opinion he said, "Without Belgium, the war is lost." B. thought Ballin was for keeping Antwerp, but that the Chancellor and company wanted to compound with the Congo. A veil for those who won't see. The revision of the Thirty Years War in my opinion will be for ever missed. Müller's tactics speak volumes for the *determined* attitude. The nation will have a word to say about that. But the rich industrial middle classes have grown slack and indolent. Not only at Charleville, but in Berlin. I have become entirely isolated. The air-raid on

Yarmouth was a blunder. Why spare London? All that flies or creeps should be concentrated on the city, is my emphatic vote recorded in writing and by word of mouth.

CHARLEVILLE,
January 26th.

My thoughts are naturally with the fleet. The same mistake as usual was made in the preliminary thrust; the fleet was in port and not on the spot where the covering forces should have been.

The Kaiser's impression of it may well be that the fleet is now safely packed in a capsule. I am going to supper to-night, and must try to urge a more virile policy.

CHARLEVILLE,
February 6th.

To-day, a second consultation with Müller, who, in so far as a new *modus vivendi* was reached, ran away. The worst of the submarine warfare is that stagnation of it all may come about through our not now having nearly enough. In that fact and in the starting off with a blustering flourish of trumpets and threats to the neutrals, lies the most serious side of the affair. The Kaiser and Müller in this matter are furious with Pohl. But with regard to myself, through the interview with Wiegand I learn that my name is being mentioned in connection with the matter, and it is believed that I was the instigator. I have meanwhile to-day told Müller that my duty to the Fatherland alone keeps me from tendering my resignation

now, but I shall certainly do so after the war. I told him, moreover, that it was at the Foreign Office and the Government circles that the state of things had been engineered. I was completely subject to the Kaiser, and exercised no influence at all. That didn't seem to me right, so long as I was in office. These representations were very painful to him. The real original great rumpus between the Kaiser and me was said to be due to the idea that I thought it necessary to coop up the fleet, and that the Kaiser didn't wish it. Now other reasons are being found, and a scapegoat being sought for.

In Prussia events are quite clear. The Russians wanted to strike a great blow, and if Hindenburg hadn't forestalled them, the Russians would now be at the gates of Königsberg and Dantzig.

CHARLEVILLE,
February 7th.

Pohl, by his vanity and lack of judgment, has made a mess that I have to clear up. The whole Pohl-*ish* direction of February 4th was superfluous. We ought to have let the submarines develop their own action, growing ever stronger and stronger according to the vicissitudes of our forces. Changes in the command were not involved necessarily by the acceptance of my suggestion. Instead of which, flourish of trumpets, intimidation, and in consequence excitement among the others, and England warned and given fourteen days to make preparations in.

The English and French understood each other in the game of bluff; one must admit that they've so far done nothing in the Dardanelles, and so long as panic doesn't set in among the Turks they'll do nothing there in the future. Apart from this, the Turks have got eight of their finest corps stationed there, and the English oppose these with an expeditionary corps.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 2nd.

This evening it has been 'phoned through that the Note to the United States would be made public, in spite of a recent utterance of the Kaiser's. The press and the public won't understand the kernel of the affair. The first, besides, is muzzled and writes to the Chancellor's dictation (see *Lokal Anzeiger* of March 1st, 1915). In this fashion the curb is put on the Chancellor in relation to the Kaiser. The *Kreuz Zeitung* has of course had the courage to write against the Note.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 3rd.

Absolutely nothing to report from here. To-day Admiral von Müller was with Bachmann, but naturally only a flying visit. As he had to accompany the Kaiser to General von Einem, he didn't call on me, and was obviously amazed to hear from Geige[1] that I was here. I must continue to wait and see what will happen next. Bethmann has stayed on with Jagow in Berlin. He will be there for another ten days pending

[1] Overseer of the Chancellory's messengers.

the negotiations. Here one is told nothing, and leads an inconsolable existence. Only the gatherings at the Maison Gailly have become exceptionally pleasant. We all get on well together, and I believe are very pleased that we do. In the morning I took a little walk with Hopmann, and in the afternoon with Bachmann, whom I showed a little of the town, and then strolled with him along the Maas with its serpentine windings. This morning early there was snow, it is true, but in spite of that, there is a feeling of spring and a mildness in the air, over which, at all events, one can rejoice.

The latest *Frankfürter Zeitung* does certainly praise our Note in reply, but only in very moderate terms. X—— told me about his discussion with Bethmann. The impression he gathered from it was little favourable to the Guider of our Destiny. He did nothing but ejaculate, "What am I to do, what am I to do?" Italy and Greece have appeared to him in a dream—Pohl led him to expect something quite different from what happened afterwards. In short, he is wearily submerged in doubts as to whether God will have compassion on him. This sort of thing can't turn out well in the end.

Unluckily Hindenburg's offensive has been held up, and Austria is no longer to be counted on. The Russians were beyond all expectations, well led, and carried out their operations with great skill. They wanted to do the same as Hindenburg. The latter fortunately put a spoke in their wheel, otherwise the

fellows would now be sitting down before Königsberg. It seems that a line of trenches now runs from the Grodno as far as Ploczk—which is bad for us.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 4th.

The decision of the *present* crisis lies undoubtedly in Rome and in the Dardanelles—that is to say, in the Turks breaking through. Roumania and Co. have got the shudders at the thought of Constantinople being Russian; the Roumanian jackals ought to have it, of course. The Turks want a submarine, but the Austrians have refused, as being too dangerous. We have offered them for it German equipments, so far no answer. But the story is characteristic of the Austrians. Their Admiral Haus is reserving his fleet for Italy. He thinks he may bring off another Lissa, but whether another Tegetthoff comes on the scene is open to question. He conversed with our Naval Attaché chiefly on exotic water-plants, which is his hobby. Off now, not to the joyful chase, but to sit at the ghastly table, where I have come to be so out of place.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 5th.

We have probably lost Submarine 8. We, however, must resign ourselves to losses, especially as, out of regard for the neutrals, drastic restrictions have been laid on submarine warfare concerning compulsory rising to the surface in doubtful cases. To-day Müller was here for an hour. I am no forwarder with him.

He entirely misunderstood what passed at the meeting at the Chancellor's. He accused me of having introduced a tone of harshness, which influenced the meeting and rendered it fruitless. Under Secretary for State Zimmermann, on the contrary, said to Bachmann the next day that the meeting had gone off very well, and we were all unanimous. So we were, up to the point of the Chancellor and Jagow standing quite by themselves.

What I had said, in fact, slowly and emphatically, was that the new American Note (No. II) was happily couched in very courteous language. That was the first impression. But when one tested the actual contents, they presented themselves as an unfair demand (here my "harshness" comes in) to relinquish the "U-boat" warfare and the use of mines, and to get practically nothing from England in return for doing it, except at the most a few solitary compromised convoys. In respect to the speech at the Kaiser's, he said that Bethmann's suspicion openly expressed that we are behind the agitation in the press. Was very improper on the Chancellor's part. He had told His Majesty so. I had energetically combated this charge. On the other hand I had alluded to loss of prestige, and that was an unheard-of thing to attribute to the Chancellor.

This whole misconception on the side of Müller is quite incomprehensible to me. The matter in question really was whether the Note made too weak an impression, and if it was accepted (as seems likely

enough) we are to be blamed for it. Because we cried out on February 4th (in the face of my written advice), so we must continue to hold out, to please the Kaiser. Just as if I had said, "The Chancellor *wants to lower the prestige.*" That would be a different thing. Then came the Wiegand affair and my attitude to the submarine controversy; which he does see now in a different light, so far as he can comprehend it. To-morrow the discussion will continue. . . . The gist of the matter is: he and the Kaiser have between them held back the fleet.

The splendid spirit that prevailed in August of last year has evaporated. The fleet could have struck, in my estimation, with brilliant success, for both ships and *personnel* were superior to England's. Now a scapegoat is being searched for. First it is found in the technique, next in myself. That view is supported involuntarily by a host of those who vote for remaining inactive. One tries to find excuses. It is only to be expected that Müller and the Kaiser will succeed in finding them. But had I only commanded the fleet in the first months! . . . Now its capacity and other circumstances are infinitely more unfavourable.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 8th.

The Vatican seems to be throwing its whole weight into the scale against Italy and Austria breaking with each other. The Vatican and the Centre have combined in order to encourage the aged Emperor Franz

Joseph. It would be very important for us if the result were in the long run even a passively favourable one for us. But at a moment like this, that is a good deal to hope for.

I have just been reading an article in which it is energetically demanded that some definite pronouncement shall be made about our keeping Belgium. That in my opinion is the only thing to do, even if we don't keep it later. The visit of Sir Edward Grey to France has taken place. In connection therewith peace negotiations are on foot. Every imaginable sign points to our wanting to give in to England.

This morning Prince Henry came to see me. He believed that he was going to be consulted on highly important questions, and yet nothing serious was mentioned. . . . Politicians had approached him, he was the man to enlighten the Kaiser, if things went on like this there would be a kind of revolution after the war, and so on. . . . They had also approached the Kaiser. I advised Prince Henry not to take the initiative; he wouldn't be listened to. A group of independent men and the princes together could do it. A single individual couldn't and would make nothing of it. Prince Henry related that there was talk of approaching Hindenburg with the idea of his taking over the whole show, but Hindenburg can't offer himself. . . . So everything remains as it was.

A walk this afternoon with Bachmann, warm, spring-like weather; in Charleville at any rate the first real spring day.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 9th.

Uhlesfeld's view that if possible we should let the others attack here in the west is shared by me; hence we must reserve what power of attack we have left, for the time being, for the east and southwest. Naturally I am unable to survey the situation thoroughly, but from all accounts there seems no doubt that the danger there is greatest. Great resolution is necessary, but in this war that has nearly always failed us at the critical moment. The generalship of Frederick William IV is repeating itself.

Here people are astonished that King Constantine has had the courage to combat Venizelos's desire to take part in the war. The Dardanelles fiasco has caused great excitement among the whole clique there, but has in no wise decided anything for us. The extraordinary thing about it is that if Constantinople had fallen into Russian hands, the Balkan States would have settled down comfortably among the nettles. The one disquieting fact about the Turkish situation is the dearth of munitions. We thought a little while ago that Roumania was going to give in and let our munition trains through. But yesterday she again became suddenly restive. Owing to this, gold from both sides flows into the hands of the sharks. The monstrous confidence in victory which the English are trumpeting through the universe, and which our hydra-headed ones are doing too, on their side, is bringing the neutral world round to a belief in England.

I told you about the *Münchner Zeitung* and the article on Belgium, and the necessity of the Imperial Government giving some outline of their intentions of what they were going to do with it. Now the paper has been confiscated, at the instigation of Bethmann. I alluded to this article in conversation to-day with a Bavarian military authority, on his way to the front (he is the second I've met). He had already read it, and entirely agreed with it. This Munich newspaper is quite an insignificant publication, but the article was excellent and written by an expert. It had the ring of being inspired by someone in Bavaria, of course. There exists there a strong opposition to the Chancellor's views. The latter is afraid that a new modern "Burgundy" may arise there. There may be some truth in what the King of Bavaria said to me at Coblenz: "and if Prussia won't have it, we will take it." Perhaps it was only a jest, but a jest with an undertone.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 10th.

The temporary slackening of the submarine campaign has its justification. But I think it's gone far enough. A——is right: in present methods of conducting and declaring war, no neutrals could be sunk. That was why I was in favour of a declaration of a blockade, and limitation of space to a zone; such as from Channel to Southampton and East Coast. Then the neutrals would have to keep away, if they didn't want to be fired at. For the present limitation of the

submarine activity the decree of February 4th in this year was not only unnecessary, but extremely mistaken. We were able to proceed without any decree, as would now happen if the neutrals weren't stirred up, no trumpets blown, and our base of operations gradually increased according to our powers.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 11th.

That Submarine 20 is lost you will have heard ere this. We are feeling very sad about it. The submarine traps which the English are setting everywhere are hazardous and the whole of the English and French torpedo fleet is hunting our U-boats. But it can't be helped, we must go through with it.

You will have heard about the Budget Commission. All parties pronounced most decidedly in favour of the annexation of Belgium. So far, so good; but as I was not there, every imaginable thing was fabricated about me. Jagow is said to have completely held his peace. I have just received your letter of the 10th. How much I should like to come to Berlin, but considering my strained relations with the Chancellor, it is better that I should stay here. Reproaches against the navy, as Erzberger says to Capelle, don't occur, and when our State is in question the Chancellor is here. One can work very well with Bachmann.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 12th.

I am glad that Bachmann is altogether on my side about the bad disposition of our ships, and does all he

can on his side to counteract it. If our fleet came into action in fairly favourable circumstances, or not too unfavourable ones, this faulty disposition would vanish like a wraith. Capelle has brought away no good impression to-day from the Budget Commission, either with what concerns the navy or the State. Perhaps after all, then, I shall have to come to Berlin. The Foreign Office has got a pat on the back on account of the American Note.

Everything is at a standstill in the east, and here too. We are not doing enough for *us*. The question of the Dardanelles excites the Balkans. It is a dangerous situation; the stepping over the precipice on the part of one little State can affect fatally the whole course of the war. Hindenburg might take another hundred thousand Russian prisoners, but it wouldn't help much. The sinking of a few English ships of the line would have a greater effect on the neutral nations.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 13th.

In spite of the fine weather, our mood here is very slack. In east and west all is quiet, and one can hardly tell yet whether we shall make any further progress. Gradually the blockade of Germany must affect the whole temper of the nation, and one can never know whether a section of the proletariat may not break out like a carrion vulture. Nothing more is to be done with the Austrians. The diplomatic prep-

arations for a world-war were incredible. A great number of intelligence departments useless, and the same to be said of many embassies. Never before the war does there seem to have been any consultations between the Government and the military officials. Blissful confidence in England's remaining neutral till the last; since 1909 no increase of our navy. In the Army High Command no comprehension of the significance of England as a factor in war, on the contrary the most implicit faith in the old victory recipe of the dead dough-makers. In conclusion the Hydra! When one reviews all this, one can only see into a dusky future. Of course it is even a worse outlook in France and Russia, but we are fighting against the whole world, inclusive of America. The grain steamer for Belgium unloaded a cargo of arms first of all in England. And here I sit and can do nothing. The disposition of our fleet was entirely wrong; but Müller, the Kaiser, and Pohl adhere to it absolutely, and will continue to do so. That is the most depressing thing of all. Our best chance certainly has been missed; the gigantic increase of the English fleet in a single year makes itself acutely apparent. This morning Müller was here, and we cultivated peaceful intercourse. Bachmann is in Flanders for a few days. This evening we had with us Gravenitz (a Wurtemberg officer), and the new Bavarian *Militätvollmächtige*. I see very few men outside, and time passes rather monotonously for me. As a matter of course I shall stick out for Belgium, but to talk to Bethmann about

it is absolutely useless. I have talked to him nevertheless for an hour and more. Since the meeting at the Kaiser's we are as the poles asunder. I haven't had a single conversation with him that has led to anything. It is quite hopeless, only the will of the people can help. For me, too, the time is not yet ripe for a renewed attack, as just at this moment war conditions can't be reviewed. Müller related to-day that a few days before the outbreak of war, Stumm, head of the English department at the Foreign Office, still persisted that England wouldn't come in. It was all bluff.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 14th.

General von Einem expressed the opinion that the French in open battle would not be able to stand against us. But now we no longer share that opinion, and moreover the French are very clever in making use of the country. Singularly free from dogmatic tactics, and their shooting is first-rate. This morning the Crown Prince, who was here, told me so. His father was absent. I talked to him more frankly this time. He was graver than usual, and expressed himself strongly about the whole "Hydra."

The *Eitel Friedrich* (cruiser) has done well, like all our ships when they attack.

Get hold of the letter, if you can, from the commander of the *Cormorant*. A real romance, but the chase of Japanese, English, French, and Russian squadrons was naturally a bit too much. The Dutch

refused him everything out of fear. The Americans didn't even give him coal, but supplied our enemies' milliards with arms and ammunition.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 15th.

I shall not require a whole sheet for this, for I have really nothing to report, and scarcely anything to do. As things now are I would gladly have stayed longer in Berlin. It is very quiet here; I see and speak with hardly anybody, and don't know how to occupy myself in these sad times. That is what especially depresses me. A little pleasure was given us by the success of our submarine. The commander of U29 (formerly of U9) dispatched five ships. Other submarines two or three. London is said to be quite excited over it. I hear their new temporarily built submarines are very well constructed so that they can be turned to good account. I should have liked so much to have stayed in Berlin for the meeting of the Reichstag, but without the war minister it didn't do much, and now it's too late.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 16th.

I have no good news to report from the east. The Austrians are again totally disheartened. It seems almost as if they didn't want to go on. The State and the army are both obviously rotten to the core, and in their interests we have unsheathed "the shining sword."

I am quite out of it with regard to plans, and owing to the general situation can't use those I have left to end it, though the whole apparatus is there ready. Bethmann must be spared, was Müller's advice to me lately. "Let him go . . . he has no luck," Fredericus Rex would have said. If only he with his walking-stick would come down from heaven!

CHARLEVILLE,
March 17th.

Nothing new from Paris. Müller was at Bachmann's to-day, and for a change was in a somewhat depressed mood, such as prevails round the Kaiser at present. This is caused by the fact that everywhere things have come to a standstill, and in consequence the negotiations with Italy appear to be at a deadlock. At any rate nothing has succeeded there so far, as she goes on winding up her demands to an ever higher pitch. Get the war log of the *Ayescha*. It is full of interesting seafaring things for you of a real romantic nature. The Dutch haven't behaved nicely about it, and in every publication brought out during the war one is struck by passages to this effect, which certainly is to be regretted. In September no one dreamed any longer of a short war. Neither did I in July and August. The Foreign Office would go on believing that it had England in the palm of its hand, and could crow over her. It still thinks so. We ought to, and could, have avoided war with Russia. In former years we could have gone to Turkey

on our own account, and then we should have had the Russians off our hands. Instead of that, we threw in our lot with Austria, and have reaped our reward. Bethmann and his set hatched an oriental policy while our economic enterprise, whether we like it or not, spread over the world necessarily to bring us into competition with England, but not into war, if Russia had not been among our opponents. We must pick up these threads again. But for great resolves we don't pull ourselves together, and we just drift on. (N.B.—*Drift* is a good old German expression that also occurs in "drifting away.")

CHARLEVILLE,
March 18th.

The position is pronounced to be unfavourable, by Bethmann and the Hydra generally. The great hope now is a collapse on France's part. My view is that we must just set our teeth . . . that is the only way. Think of Fredericus Rex after Künersdorf, and we haven't as yet experienced anything quite so bad as that! Bethmann and Jagow and their followers are acting feebly in all directions for *internal political reasons,* internal reasons that are known everywhere *externally* and *operate dangerously.*

Thank you for "Stein." The memory of these men seems to have died out, but what a powerful group he had round him, Blücher, Scharnhorst, Boyen, Gneisenau, "a band of brothers," as Nelson said. But how about 1914-15? Even the worthy Bachmann

is horrified at the Hydra; he found the whole company to-day busy gardening, but with hang-dog heads. Recently there was discovered in a manure heap, in the same garden, a case of 156 bottles of the best wine.

U—— underestimates the actual power of the Hydra. According to the traditions I have grown up with, I can't possibly stand in *open* opposition to it, though therein, properly speaking, lay my chief means. For the rest, I am not allowed to further my principle of action. If I could only turn out submarines more speedily . . . but it is to be hoped that in two or three weeks our relays will be in operation. The commanders of our submarines are doing their part magnificently . . . their logs are as exciting as novels.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 19th.

Herr von Mutuns came with the Foreign Office's congratulations. Earlier the Kaiser rang me up and congratulated me. A further birthday treat was the news that two English ships of the line had been sunk in the Dardanelles, and a French liner, the *Bouvet*. We had already had a telegram from Usedom with news of the sinking of the *Bouvet*. The Kaiserin sent me a gracious telegram which greatly pleased me. If good wishes can be of any help, I am indeed well supplied.

In the east the Russians are once more bringing huge masses into the battle, and they fight with great

bravery and dash. Eichhorn would be in a bad way if the Russians had more guns. The Austrians haven't advanced an inch. It seems that, without doubt, the Russians were going to strike a powerful blow, but their massed troops came too late.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 20th.

Yesterday evening it was again very flat. Conversation dragged. The Kaiser saw big victories everywhere, or pretended to see them in order to allay his own anxiety. The one bright spot was the confirmation of the English losses in the Dardanelles. The Turks' or, more strictly speaking, our casualties were slight, but the want of munitions was felt. Bachmann is also horrified at the administration of the Cabinet; socially as well as officially.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 21st.

Your letter of yesterday just received. Yes, I should have done more, if I had been allowed a freer hand. Müller has received urgent petitions from various people, Bachmann, Dick, etc., suggesting that I shall be appointed First Lord of the Admiralty for the duration of the war, and that I shall be left to my own devices as to where and when I go on board. Answer was invariably ". . . Out of the question—the Kaiser would never consent." The latter wants to conduct the naval war himself, and naturally he couldn't do that with me at his side. I meditate and

meditate on how I am to escape from the position in which I find myself. Formally speaking, Pohl has the free hand, so how can I interfere when he does nothing, and says that he has no opportunity?

The command that battle is to be sought *à tout prix* can't be issued, but must be locked in the breast of the person concerned. Circumstances are different in the sea-struggle from what they are in the war on land. To-day an announcement comes from Berlin that 9 milliards have been subscribed. That is striking evidence of a unanimous purpose.

We hear from Pohl that the English, the day after the sinking of their ships, renewed their attack on the Dardanelles, which shows the right spirit. In a like fashion we should have attacked again at once, on January 25th, even if it had been simply a case of *per far contra.* But the Cabinet has lowered the spirit of the fleet; the bacillus by this time has penetrated pretty deeply, and without drastic changes in the *personnel* there is not much prospect of improvement.

We have no fresh news from Constantinople. Our casualties are small, the forts little damaged. Only the lack of munitions is grievous. As things are now, the forcing of the Dardanelles would be a severe blow for us. Yesterday's last attempt on Przemysl has failed, the activity of the Russians is great on the Memel as well.

We have no trumps left. Let us hope that in April the submarine war will make further strides.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 22nd.

To-day, dinner at His Majesty's in honour of the birthday of Kaiser Wilhelm the First. Bachmann called attention to the fact that a great part of the English fleet was now in the Dardanelles, and that the submarine war absorbed no end of light fighting forces. If anything was to be done, this was a good time to do it. Pohl resented any such suggestion. He was not contemplating doing anything, on the contrary he wanted to enclose himself still more inside a radius of mines. Really it is hopeless. There's a fleet of forty armoured ships, half of which are super-dreadnoughts, and over 100 torpedo boats lying rusting in port, while Germany is engaged in a struggle for her very existence, and I have to sit here, powerless.

Would that this was the only fault of the Cabinet system. But for the last two or three decades I have lived through this objectless paltering and parade of red-tapeism. I have seen how each official head of the department "works for himself alone and thinks '*himself*' the pivot on which everything turns, and that it is to the interest of everybody to appeal to him. . . ." And now we are in the midst of this awful war, and the same confusion exists, the same objectlessness, from the point of view of unity. In Constantinople, in the navy, in the army, in politics, no co-operation, nearly everyone still squinting towards the Kaiser, who is surrounded with weak people.

There is only one remedy. That is to make Hindenburg Chancellor of the Empire, Chief of the General Staff, and Chief of the Admiral's Staff all in one. Only look at the ovations in the Reichstag, they evince a complete oblivion of the real evil.

Fortunately the fall of Przemsyl comes almost at the same moment as the defeat of the English in the Dardanelles. The one will lessen the effect of the other. But everywhere the Russians are attacking ruthlessly and the Austrians are being beaten, and we too are getting nervous. Hindenburg is coming to the end of his forces. I have been told that Bethmann's impression was that the latter should be recalled from Poland.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 23rd.

His Majesty honoured the new knights *pour le mérite* with a speech in which he compared them to a certain extent with the Palidones who not far from here, at Sedan, helped Kaiser Wilhelm the Great to create the German Empire. I sat between Solnis and Lyncker. The latter deplored the utterance of Moltke in the Star Saal on the receipt of the news that England was coming into the war. "The more Englishmen, the better." He said something the same to me when we travelled together to Coblenz, and I pointed out to him that he shouldn't underrate the direct participation of the English army. Not only politically, but from a military point of view, we have floundered into this war. No reflection on how a world-war

should be conducted, no joint leadership—in short, just as it is now in the war itself. I remember that I wanted to confer with Moltke before his departure from Berlin to Constantinople and Turkey; he declined curtly because it would not have interested him. On the whole the tone was very lacking in enthusiasm. The fall of Przemysl weighed heavily on everybody. As I hear, there are traces of the same feeling at the front. I next conversed with General von X——, and tried to indicate that greater unity in the whole command must come. The Kaiser ought to defer his power, at least for the time being, to someone else, Hindenburg for instance. I soon saw, however, that such an idea didn't at all meet the views of General von X——, the Kaiser's favour is sufficient for him. Yesterday Bethmann very feebly tried to argue that we were only fighting about Belgium, otherwise we might have peace. *Abroad, they will of course get wind of this, and Belgium will be estimated as a kind of "pound of flesh" mortgage, even if we wanted to give it up afterwards.*

Prince Adalbert is here, and is trying to get out of his father an order for Pohl to do nothing. Prince Adalbert appears to be acting under Pohl's instructions. The latter has now a free hand to act according to his own judgment. So that the motive of this proceeding lies in Pohl's wish to be excused, by a command, for impassivity and doing nothing. This seemed to me preposterous. Prince Adalbert came to-day to Bachmann with the message that the Kaiser

acquiesced, and that he was deputed to tell me, and him—Admiral Bachmann—of his pleasure. Bachmann declined at once; he would, in such a fashion, accept no "pleasure" of His Majesty. Prince Adalbert has not yet come to me. I will send him about his business if he does. Isn't it enough to make one's hair stand on end. Pohl plays second fiddle to the Kaiser. Indeed, my fears wth regard to Pohl are more than justified.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 24th.

This morning Prince Adalbert called on me and Bachmann was present. Our conversation was only general. Afterwards I learned from Bachmann that Prince Adalbert had not dared to risk communicating to me that the fleet was to stand still by word of command. All the same he had telegraphed it to Pohl as the Kaiser's command. A quite unheard-of proceeding, which cannot be tolerated.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 25th.

The amiable, always accommodating Bachmann has had a tiff with the Chancellor, who wrote him a positively incredible letter. The subject in dispute was a paltry *lapsus linguæ* that was let slip by a Reserve officer of the Berlin Admiral's Staff, at a private function. He merely remarked something to the effect that the Foreign Office appeared to have been slack in the U-boat affair (in February). Great excitement

thereat on the part of the Chancellor. The "man who talked of an illusion as an achievement" rubbed in twice by word of mouth at Bachmann's and then *three epistles!* This sort of touchiness is characteristic of the people who guide our destiny in these serious times.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 26th.

The Turk, Colonel von Franckenberg came, and told us about the ructions between Enver, Leman, and the Ambassador. The colonel had been through the Suez campaign. They were mostly Arab troops, who were always routed by gunfire; they, the Turks themselves, could do little against the firing of the ships. There were dug-outs on the whole Egyptian side, with sand-bags and so on. During the summer only easy operations were possible, in the autumn they would attack again. But, as I said, that would be too late. On the whole the Turkish kingdom doesn't seem to be doing much. We have selected curious allies. If we only had not sent on its behalf a military mission, and had adopted no anti-Russian policy with England in the Balkans! If instead of that we had told the Russians that for all we cared they might go to Constantinople, then the Bear would be now sitting opposite the Whale, and the whole herd of goats from the Balkans would be taking refuge in our arms!

General S—— complained again about the dearth of munitions, especially the lack of powder.

This question of powder will perhaps decide the

war. The continuous lack of it with us costs us every day several hundred men, sometimes more. The division of authority between the war ministers and General Staff in time of peace weakens the joint outlook for what is essential.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 26th.

Herr von N—— is perfectly right. It is an unheard-of failure in our supreme command in which the head is implicated. I have seen it coming for a decade. How often have I said to you that I didn't know how the catastrophe would come, but that it was bound to come some day! That is why it is so dreadful to be by and witness it, and to be part of it.

I am going to see X—— to-day, but with no intention of talking matters over with him. That would do no good. General von H—— is also useless to me. He is essentially a soldier, and wants to be nothing else. Hindenburg might be our salvation. I know him personally, but only slightly, and have no power of judging whether he possesses political vision. He is said to be a shrewd and thoughtful man. The proper stimulus for the bold and daring enterprises in the east is said to be Ludendorff. If I knew Hindenburg better, and had some pretext, I would go and see him. But I have been told that the Crown Prince is working in this direction. He will meet with no success, however, or only too late. Bethmann and his clique, Ballin, and even now Reichstag circles are muddling

everything feebly. Peace for us, minus a great deal, yet peace. If one really was in earnest about wanting it, nothing could be worse for the conclusion of peace than this weak incompetence.

I hear that things in France are looking very black; and I believe hopes are being built on Caillaux personally. I don't think this is true. The temporary military dictatorship of Joffre and Poincaré still rules, and will be kept on the leash by the English. Last night the English Admiralty announced that it had grounds for believing Submarine 29 (Widdigen) had been sunk in the Irish Sea with the whole crew. It wouldn't make this public without good reason, and U29 was surprisable. A most lamentable incident. Widdigen perhaps was too confident, and then there's that perilous cautiousness towards neutrals!

CHARLEVILLE,
March 27th.

This morning early Müller was here and imparted to Bachmann that he had accomplished nothing with the Kaiser. He had expressed a wish to be spared memorandums, and said that he didn't wish to be troubled with the fleet, hence the order. With infinite difficulty Müller had elicited that at least Bachmann was to have an audience previously; this will take place on Monday. If things go on like this I foresee a gloomy ending. Everything is on the verge of bankruptcy in Turkey, and then the Balkan flood and the carrion vulture will be let loose on Austria. I see

only one way out: the Kaiser must say that he is on the sick list for eight weeks or more, Hindenburg must come and take Bethmann's place, and both the army and the Admiralty shall be directed by him *and* the Emperor. The Kaiser must next go to Berlin. Kessel looked me up, and he expressed himself as horrified at the condition of the Kaiser's health. "He had no voice in anything, he had as a matter of fact done nothing, and was already beginning to see that in the end he'd have to pay the piper," so said the Kaiser. Kessel thought that the King of Bavaria must be prevailed upon to talk him over into declaring himself on the sick list. I advised against it; any such proceeding should come from his side, and the Kaiserin's influence with him should be used. The Staff Physician Z—— and his own medical adviser would have to demand it urgently from a medical point of view, for he would never go on sick leave without.

Apparently Hindenburg has great difficulties in front of him, and he (Kessel) cannot bear Ludendorff. It seems that only with the help of a great collapse can a change come, and then it will be too late. The assumption that in the southeast lies the key to the final issue of the war appears to be gaining ground with many.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 28th.

To-day, early in the morning, I had to pay Prince Leopold of Bavaria a visit. He had little informa-

tion to impart, only was sure that we must in all circumstances hold out. Now I am expecting the staff doctor, with whom I went to discuss the sick-leave matter. No news, alas! of Submarine 29, so one must give it up as lost. What you write on the subject of the Foreign Office is very interesting. But the situation there is really so; the former ambassador's work, now under Zimmermann, doesn't suit either of them. For the rest I am not in any doubt about the present position there, and I can't rate Zimmermann so high; whether he has really "vision" and can seize a point on the rebound, is dubious to me. I wasn't able to discover it in the Budget Commission. He took a strong part in the drifting into war in July. He was also responsible in giving Austria a free hand against Serbia. He regarded the whole affair as a diplomatic war and wished to score a personal success. Then in the U-boat debate he rode the high horse. In two days he totally turned round. As a matter of fact I am cold-shouldered by the whole lot of them, so that I can't work with either the Chancellor or the Secretary of State.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 29th.

The atmosphere here is extremely depressed. Falkenhayn says he can do no more. One hasn't any longer the least confidence in the Austrians. Bethmann and his supporters are seriously thinking of grovelling

to England. That in my opinion would be the worst possible thing to do. To my mind there is only one way out, and that is to treat with Russia. Hindenburg could only be of service if he conquered everything, and that the Kaiser and the whole Hydra would never permit. But it is on this one man that our actual power exists. I shall try before very long to come to Berlin, but first I should like to have another conversation with the Crown Prince. The idea of K——'s to make a strategical curve in the east is quite good. It would, I think, however, only come to the fore if the Russian army were smashed, and at present there is no sign of that happening. The fellows go on attacking vigorously, even with the Landsturm, as they did on the Memel. And, moreover, by that method we should never be rid of the Russian danger in the future. The fellows ought to have been diverted towards the warm water, instead of which we in conjunction with England have hindered it, and now have our reward. And you may be sure that after the war Bethmann and his set will do their utmost to represent me as its evil genius. I scarcely know a single person who has been well disposed towards me, who hasn't after a conversation with Zimmermann had all his good impression of me wiped out. I know that it amounted to quite a system when I was in Berlin. I don't expect anything to come of an explanation with Bethmann. Never yet has it done any good in my case, or in that of others. He is the unluckiest choice for his post that could have been

made. Nevertheless, I'll try when I get the opportunity. The whole constitution that his post represents is only suited to exceptional giants. In the ordinary way it is dangerous, as has now been proved and as we saw years ago. Bachmann goes to the Kaiser to-day in order to decide about the order to Pohl. The Crown Prince has written his father a letter the postscript of which has come to our knowledge. In it he begs of his father to rescind the limitations imposed now on the submarine warfare which have caused us to lose too much. The Crown Prince sees the matter quite clearly, but it is a pity he never learnt to work. The letter is said to contain other things. I have heard that the Crown Prince is also set on Hindenburg. My staff doctor says that the Kaiser prays formally for a release through the shunting of his responsibility on to others, but then he comes up against the wall with which he has surrounded himself, and against his self-conceit. Old Januschauer writes to me that the Kaiser will be wondering how much of his kingdom of Prussia will be left after the war.

CHARLEVILLE,
March 30th.

Bachmann returned from his audience to-day quite sorrowful. The Kaiser listened to him, then he held a half-hour's counter-audience, and said "No. The fleet should only go out if it didn't strike. If the last was not approved of, then the fleet should stay in."

CHARLEVILLE,
March 31st.

Goltz-Pasha is here. But up till now I haven't seen him. He has come to sue for the capture of the Serbian rag-tag and bob-tail. I conversed the other day with a lieutenant-colonel of the Jägers, who on March 19th left Constantinople, and set forth vividly how the issue of the war now depended on the Dardanelles and Serbia. Both Bachmann and I share this view. It is merely a question of whether one can spare troops from here while enemy troops are massing as they now are on the western front. That could be best decided by someone who was not locally interested here. Geographically expressed, the decision must really take place in Berlin. Meanwhile very disquieting news has come from the Carpathians. The Austrians are yielding. The Jäger lieutenant von R—— recounted how massive officers sat on the back of the Austrian provision wagons, but never in the front. Frequently he heard surprise expressed that we sent so many sons of our best families into the firing line, and now the ragged nationalities and the ignorant General Staff have only just discovered these things for themselves.

The Jäger officer would have liked an audience with His Majesty, but Plessen declined. It wouldn't be pleasant for His Majesty just now to hear more about Turkey. I take a very serious view of our future. The Russian army is fighting very well and is better led than was ever anticipated. They recover from

their defeats with amazing rapidity. The French, on the defensive, fight splendidly. The English have been under-rated. The superiority of forces against us is powerful and our commanders have not, sad to say, risen to the occasion. In spite of this, in my opinion we must continue to hold on, so long as Austria doesn't entirely collapse. The Entente powers, however, are not out for the defeat of Austria, but for the crushing of Germany alone. With regard to U.'s letter, I can only express the wish that he may be right in his conclusion that the middle-class party are unanimous on the point of holding out. Erzberger appears to be already overthrown, and I've had a letter from an Independent Conservative parliamentarian that smacks strongly of downfall. . . . Haug, Banks, Wilhelmstrasse, and all their branches; and in the army itself there are no outstanding occurrences of an encouraging nature except in the east. The Wilhelmstrasse, if they want to face deficit, should shout plus, as England has done in such a grand manner, then the deficit would at least be smaller.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 1st.

If the work of my life is wrecked, I believe that I shall have much to bear. I have already written to you on the result of Prince Adalbert's mission. The order for Pohl which Bachmann has dispatched is thoroughly to my approval. Pohl in accordance therewith is to act solely on his own authority, but

whether he has the impulse to act is another question. But I must admit that circumstances for him have now become much more difficult. The submarines go on being effective, but the necessity of sparing the neutrals weakens their whole operations and involves us in losses. The latest is that grain is to be convoyed to England by Norwegian ships via Norwegian ports. Bachmann to-day was summoned to a conclave with Falkenhayn on the subject of whether Austria couldn't do something at sea. Unluckily we heard yesterday that the attempt to send munitions to Turkey, by the Danube, had failed. The Danube steamer concerned in this attempt was fired on and destroyed by Austria. B. found that the Army High Command was somewhat in perplexity, not knowing exactly what to do next. When one studies Frederick the Great, one is always amazed and delighted at how in the most difficult situations the new idea comes, and is carried out like a lightning flash.

I don't know whether U. has read Homer Lee; he sets forth that it is necessary for the progress of the world that the Anglo-Saxon race, England plus America, alone should rule the earth; that it would be necessary with this object to keep a big army on the German-Dutch frontier, and in Schleswig, in order to combat Germanism, which would bar the progress of civilization if it were not suppressed. From his own point of view, the man is right. For the moment Falkenhayn is again troubled about Italy. The nego-

tiations are said to have come to a standstill in a dangerous manner.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 2nd.

I went to church to-day to celebrate Good Friday. After church there was a march past, but without music. I told the Kaiser that before long I was going to Flanders, Berlin, and Hamburg on submarine business. Then we conversed on the topic of the U-boat campaign; and I seized the opportunity of saying that the order to spare neutrals had created a great danger for the submarines; they could too easily be rammed on rising to the surface. The Kaiser went at once to Bachmann, to give him an express audience. We made a little round in the walk home. Had hardly got there, before a telephone message came from Müller, that he would like first to get into touch with the Chancellor about it. Afterwards Goltz Pasha called on me. He is here to hold an audience with the Kaiser on the subject of the Serbian State and the Osmans.

He has found indecision here. It is the grave question of the hour: are we going to hesitate again and be too late? Breaking through here seems scarcely possible; in Prussia everything halts; the Austrians are falling back—*Activité célerité,* said Napoleon I. Act we must, but how is it to be done, with the Hydra? The Kaiser said the other day, that he would have every Frenchman cleared out of Alsace (the corner by Belfort). Besides, the bones of a Pomeranian

Grenadier were worth more to him than all the Balkans. Nevertheless whole hecatombs have been sacrificed to the Serbian quarrel; and the fatal hour for the German Empire is standing at the door.

Of his sons, the Kaiser hears oftenest from Prince Eitel Fritz, but he is too simply a soldier. Müller's influence is now the greatest. He almost rules the State, at any rate the navy, and doesn't believe it himself. I have recently told him my belief that Bethmann must go. Yes, but who is to be put in his place? Whereupon, I mentioned Hindenburg. Pohl has written to Bachmann that Prince Adalbert brought him the inferred command not to attempt anything more. Pohl pretends not to have had anything to do with it. In the meantime Bachmann's revised version of the command gives the freest possible hand for action. Not that I think the fleet will now render any notable assistance. This is the war of missed opportunities.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 3rd.

This evening, summoned to His Majesty. To-morrow evening we are to have Prince Solms here and little Prince Waldemar. The Kaiser has really given in now, and has granted absolutely free action to the submarines. Latterly the submarine war has been thoroughly successful. Trade in England is declining steadily with Scandinavia and Holland for example, at the rate of 80 per cent. Insurance premiums have

gone up with giant leaps, and in proportion the cost of living in England, and also wages. That at least is something that it is always satisfactory to hear. Falkenhayn is to-day gone to Berlin. Everyone is very uneasy here about Italy, and concentration of troops towards the east has been established. Had things been settled according to Prince Adalbert's ideas, the affair would be different; in that contingency, Bachmann and I would have been shelved. But now as the matter stands Pohl has an entirely free hand, and the submarine warfare can go on unhindered.

So soon as the Russians are no longer ice-bound, they will undertake something; and we shall be at a disadvantage, as was the case last autumn, so it is feared here, where one is beginning to be nervous. The Russians too have succeeded in laying mines in the Baltic, as far as Rügru. I intend the day after to-morrow to travel to Bruges and stay there a few days.

To-day Müller said to Bachmann the Chancellor must be spared, and allowed to stay in office. Once again he has made such a fine speech, at the Bismarck celebration. Isn't that original? I wonder that Bismarck didn't step down from his pedestal.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 4th.

America is going on supplying arms and munitions, and neither the Irish nor the German Americans will alter it, for it is too good a business. The retreat of

the Austrians is stayed, as the Prussians stepped in at the last minute. All the danger is now concentrated in Italy. Hindenburg ought to be put in Bethmann's place, otherwise the upshot of the affair will be bad. Thank you for Wolf's address, about which I was not quite sure. I am so sorry for the poor boy, but would he be much happier now under Pohl, who with Müller has made such a ghastly muddle of the naval campaign? Bachmann told me to-day how urgently he had entreated Müller to lay the whole matter before me, and how he had always vehemently replied that the Kaiser would on no condition agree. X. writes too that I ought to insist on it. I could only do it if I said that Pohl was no good for the purpose, and this without any reserve. I should merely place the question before the Cabinet and gain nothing. Bachmann and I now work together in perfect harmony and so I reap more advantage than if I were in the wrong box.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 5th.

Yesterday evening animated conversation went on till pretty late. I quite liked Wild von Hohenboen. We had many things in common. His idea is that in the extreme case we could hold out against Italy too, and moreover would have to. Behind the front here, powerful forces are being massed. The intention is now to get Kitchener's army out of the way. He thought it quite wrong, too, that we didn't speak

out our mind about Belgium. The treatment of the question by the Chancellor was, seemingly, sheer weakness, and showed no will to conquer. Little Prince Waldemar was very nice, but shy, and old Solms told hunting stories and stroked his moustache.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 8th.

Prince Henry is to recruit here a little after his arduous task at Kiel! A programme has been drawn up. The Kaiser overwhelmed with news of victories . . . the opposite may not be brought to him, among others "gigantic rising in India," etc. The connoisseurs are, on the other hand, in dejection. The Kaiser and his brother abuse England; Valentine said, if only we would follow the policy of Metternich.[1] Very characteristic that. The Kaiser seeks consolation in the, to my mind, dangerous idea that the First Punic war was a failure, it was not till the Second that. . . . Well then, we must build a lot more ships. This kind of thing is our misfortune and may be our ruin. And yet they all cry Hallelujah. No conception of the extreme gravity of the situation for the future of Germany. In short, I am under the impression we shall sue to England.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 9th.

To-day Müller was here and I demanded of him an assurance that in any kind of peace negotiations that might arise I should have a voice, as I had been

[1] Till 1912 German Ambassador to England.

promised at the beginning of the war. Müller assented —perhaps my request is in some degree two-edged, for it is too late for any co-operation, but at least I have eased my conscience. Müller knew nothing of any peace negotiations. Once more I explained to him my whole point of view, and succeeded momentarily in impressing him. He said it was too deplorable that the Kaiser was surrounded by mere la-de-da courtiers. These gentry were, from long habit, too inclined, one and all, to take their cue from the Kaiser's method. That was much to be regretted. He did not consider himself in the matter at all. He admitted jealousy of Hindenburg in the east. In connection with our fleet, the Kaiser wished to be left in peace, and not to be worried about it; he himself really didn't know what the next day might bring forth.

To-day the Crown Prince has been extremely courteous, but very reserved. I have still hopes of him. Certainly he hasn't learnt to work, but he has discretion, lets other men work, is not vain, and will have nothing to do with the Cabinet adminstration. I believe too that he is a good judge of character. But the Kaiser won't give him his head. Müller boasts that he helped us out in the Prince Adalbert business; he hoped, however, that Pohl would do his part.

Unfortunately we haven't got any munitions through to Turkey, and therein for the moment the danger lies. Just now things are rather better with Italy.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 10th.

The news that comes to hand about the political situation is so uncertain that one never knows what to believe. To-day it is reported that the feeling in England is very slack, and that England wants to direct the policy into a different channel. It is to be hoped that we shan't help her in this.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 11th.

W. came in to see me to-day and related that in Berlin a powerful league has been formed to which many influential persons belong, to arrange peace at any price with England. I hadn't heard of it before. Financiers, bankers, all former ambassadors and attachés; in addition the Wilhelmstrasse renegades, in full force, "lasciate ogni speranza." One may indeed say, according to news received here, the English are not at all happy or hopeful. The submarine war is having great effect, it increases economic difficulties, and in addition, there is no lasting arrangement with the Japs. Endurance and initiative were for us the one right thing. Our naval attaché in Rome has communicated disquieting news. It seems that England is threatening Italy, and apparently the fellows can't stand it. The brigandage against Austria appeals to the man in the street more than the future position on the Mediterranean. To-day I went to church out of respect to Prince Henry. A very indifferent sermon. To believe, means to conquer. Just as if one

hadn't to help God Almighty out a little! I have had, I am sorry to say, to give up Hopmann. It was a real pain to me. I can only make use of Capelle in certain matters; and besides he lives too much in his own future. For me this war must have a sad end.

Had I commanded the fleet at the beginning! I can't help thinking always of that.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 12th.

Yesterday, very pleasant evening at Stenay (headquarters of Crown Prince). The Prince said he was delighted to see me at Stenay, else it would have been rather difficult to meet, as we were both "suspect." This remark gave me great satisfaction. To-day I had another conversation with Wild von Hohenboen. I was again pleased with him, and we agreed that whatever happens we must stand together. Bachmann's dispute with Bethmann is still going on. Müller has again taken Bethmann's part in an unheard-of manner. I entertain a suspicion that Bachmann intentionally broke a lance because he is on my side. When he took over his present post, Müller was perpetually exhorting him to be on the side of Bethmann, no matter what the circumstances. There was really no occasion unless was added "not on the side of the Secretary of State."

Retzmann [1] wrote the other day to Hopmann: "We shall be fighting to the bitter end against the English-

[1] For several years naval attaché in Washington.

American-Belgian-Franco capitalist combine, which wanted to dispose of the world to its own advantage, because we were the one people who could go their own way alone, and, what is more, succeed. Oil trusts, tobacco trusts, Chinese railways, etc.

"A little echo from Stenay. Prince Henry said to the Crown Prince one must always expect to be abused; it had been the same with his grandfather, and father, and when the Crown Prince's turn came, it would be the same, too, with him. The Crown Prince said one must first see the sort of people whom the Kaiser had about him, before one could judge. Prince Henry suggested that he, the Crown Prince, would choose very similar people, whereupon the latter said 'No, that I never would.'"

It was so wrong to forbid the object of the war to be discussed. One might say, that we would never suffer again such a conspiracy as that formed by England, Belgium, and France, still it was an object, and allowed the necessary freedom. The lukewarm flabbiness of the Chancellor is foolish. If Italy is to be stopped, the affair is not, after all, so bad for us. But I am afraid that here we lack the required energy to stimulate Austria. It has unfortunately been too clearly demonstrated that this limb is rotten, and we are unable to guarantee its duration for any length of time. Müller would bolster it up with a Greater Serbia, or Great Slav State. We have really loaded the dying camel too heavily.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 14th.

It is a pity that I haven't come into any touch at all with Falkenhayn. What J. says, that the other party must pull itself together, is difficult in that people holding office can't act disloyally. I can officially and to people in office express my opinion freely, but I can't conspire, for instance, with Parliamentarians. What I fear is that there is no one at the top who will take the lead. To mention names, Krupp, Henckel, etc. Krupp, with whom I am personally intimate, I could, as diplomat, tell everything, but I couldn't infuse into him the *will* to act. If this *will* really animated high personages and leaders, then would the scheme of a league of landowners, a Haus league, for the free discussion of war aims, not have hung fire as long as it actually has. In short, I still believe, alas! If things aren't altered it will be brought into the argument.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 15th.

I have tried to get something out of Prince Henry about naval affairs. Either he had nothing to say, or wished to keep it back. I still can't grasp why our fleet didn't strike last autumn. Ingenohl had the fate of Europe in the palm of his hand. Our relations, or rather regotiations with Italy are not yet broken off, so a slender hope still remains of her not striking. The French airmen have dropped five bombs here, and unfortunately only Germans were killed. Now

the Charlevillers are rejoicing over these heroes who have played us this dirty trick, and we are actually good-natured enough to repair the damage they have done. The Kaiser is furious, and the latest is that Buckingham Palace is to be "in bounds." He really seems to imagine that by a tacit harmony between the chiefs he can spare himself. Curious logic!

CHARLEVILLE,
April 17th.

Müller has complained about the Zeppelin raids, and I think that he is quite right. I shall try to put a stop to this childish juggling with Zeppelin airships. Bachmann went last night to a big dinner at the War Minister's. There he's seen with his own eyes how Pohl even in these circles makes a goose of himself with his bragging prophecies, etc. "We can destroy London, the army couldn't attempt such a thing—England's doom is in the submarine warfare." And it's such a contemptible little man as this that Müller appoints as Chief of the Admiralty Staff, and now as commander of the fleet. Perhaps if I had been able to judge Ingenohl last autumn as I can at present, I might have succeeded better with the Kaiser.

The idea of a *rapprochement* with England is, doubtless, according to the Foreign Office's plan, being praised in the press, and this standpoint, of course, is diametrically opposed to the keeping of Belgium in any shape or form. If we should follow the policy recommended by Count Mont (ostensibly with the

knowledge of the Foreign Office), in the *Berliner Tageblatt,* we shall confess ourselves beaten and simply sink to the position of England's body-slave and tool against Russia. The danger of the Russian inundation can only be met by trying to stem it. But if we don't succeed in that, and we are bound to fight once more against Russia, this time on the side of England, there will be nothing further for us to do but pour out our blood for that purpose. We were forced to support Russia, on the question of Persia, at the time of the Potsdam Convention, and if that doesn't suffice, we must say to them, go to the Bosphorus, we've no objection. Then the whole company would toady us. Although the methods of procedure are different to-day, Bismarck was right in the ground-principle.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 18th.

To-day I was at church. There one always meets every variety of person. To-day Dallwitz was there. We talked about the war and also got on the topic of Tarasp. Dallwitz said that I had then been right, word for word. I took the opportunity of drawing his attention to the "approach" to England, and in this he shared my views. Dallwitz is the candidate for the Chancellorship, backed by Valentine. The War Minister delighted me with the remark "It's begun to roll—roll." So then our surplus strength is to be turned to account, and not to wait any longer

for Italy. If the steam-roller succeeds in its rolling, that will be the best cold douche Italy can have. Whether or no Hindenburg is too great a man for the Kaiser, he is the right man. I am finally disgusted with the eternal bickerings of the Cabinet. Do you think they'll ever cease? Anyhow I could not work with it, apart from the fact that a post in it would not be in accordance with my gifts. I have read Tim Klein's *Bismarck* with great enjoyment. How often the old giant must have turned in his grave since he died! I saw the storm gathering years ago, but could do nothing to avert it. For years I have seen how the fleet was being demoralized, and worked for parades and inspections. . . . I recognized the fact perfectly and have often talked it over with my colleagues without being able to effect any improvement. As X. wrote to me lately, he was sorry that he had advised me to stay on in the autumn of 1912 (when, by the way, came that outrageous letter from Holtzdorfer, inspired by the Kaiser). X. is absolutely right; I have regretted ever since the war that I didn't take my *congé* then. I shall look out with intense interest to see if Bethmann's attitude behind the Count Mont article has any effect.

Bethmann has now won over the Social Democrats and Liberals on the Left with his anti-Russian policy; Erzberger, at all events, has gone over to his camp, which means a great deal. It is rumoured here that England, up to a certain point, will be gracious. Then, at once, arms will be opened here and England asked

to come and make her bed with us, in spite of all the huzzahs and fanfares of victory. Wait and see! Our little submarines pop into eternity everything that comes in their way. The Chancellor's hair stands on end, and it makes the Kaiser nervous also. Against us all things are permissible, and our modesty and virtue now, when our existence hangs on a thread, causes the others to have doubts about our winning. But if we aren't weak-kneed we shall conquer.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 19th.

Müller came to see me to-day and said that probably before the end of the month the Kaiser will be moving somewhere else. Müller evidently thinks that in such circumstances as these the Kaiser is best out of the way. I think so too. Hindenburg must be put in his place, in order to create terror abroad. It is pathetic that to talk of war aims is forbidden and a pack of hounds let loose to foster weakness and milksopism, just at the moment when everything depends on our stiffening our backs.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 20th.

That the Social Democrats are supporting the Chancellor is certain. The Grand Seigneurs are miserable wretches, their Serene Highnesses fine folk, not quite applicable to Ludwig the Bear. The two or three Conservative members are too weak. Hintze's journey to Peking is regarded as a consummate coup, especially

brought off by the officials of the Foreign Office. I could almost be tempted to become Bethmann's successor, if it were only to hurl out those fellows. But there's such a lot of them that one would never accomplish it.

That England is swearing is highly satisfactory, for it demonstrates that she is beginning to be uncomfortable. Would that we could get the new kind of submarines turned out and ready for action before England lets herself be inveigled into peace negotiations. Here the Kaiser and his "organs" are tearing their hair again, because the little U-boat has rammed the Dutch. He may thank himself for that. Instead of standing up proudly and firmly against neutral Holland, not too well disposed towards us, we cringe and humbly beg pardon of the Dutch. Thank God that Bachmann is here now. The Chancellor honours him with his displeasure and Müller is always raging furiously against us.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 21st.

To-day the Kaiserin summoned me to an interview. I told her my unvarnished opinion of the state of things. The Kaiser was encircled and embedded here in a mass of flabbiness. (*"Yes, unfortunately, it is true,"* said she.)

I told her frankly that we ought, as Frederick the Great said, to arm our hearts with steel, and not in any circumstances knock under to, and cry out for help

from, those who wanted to lay us in the dust. She said that the conduct of Mont was unheard-of, but the Kaiser himself would not give the lead. I said that Mont's case was by no means isolated, and was closely associated with the Wilhelmstrasse. I told her what might possibly be done if Bethmann fell from office, and that was to call in Hindenburg. She thought he would never consent, being too purely a military man. I told her very plainly that he had a sound human understanding and that the very fact of his being "military" appeared to me to be an advantage, as it would infuse unity into the whole. She next remarked that it wouldn't be believed; that she held back on account of her six sons; whereupon I said that on the contrary all who had the honour to know the circumstances intimately, centred their hopes on her. Therefore it was highly desirable that the Kaiser should come to Berlin, where such a limited sphere of influence around him could not exist in the same degree.

To-morrow she leaves. I don't believe either that she can alter the situation.

If His Majesty would leave the war on sea to me, and would let me go where I liked, then I would compass it. But there can be no question of his doing anything of the kind. Bethmann, Müller, and Treutler together do all they can to prevent the navy coming into action, and the Kaiser nearly faints when it strikes the smallest blow. To have to stay here and endure all this is terrible for me. This evening I was invited

to Herr von Stumm's (the typical Foreign Office official), to meet the Turkish Minister of Finance, Djavid Bey, and compliment the Turks. I couldn't very well refuse.

CHARLEVILLE,
April 22nd.

To-day, shortly before lunch, the War Minister came to congratulate me on my fifty years of service, before starting on his tour of Flanders. He did it very heartily. He expressed a firm belief still in the success of our fleet. But I don't believe in it myself any longer. The best opportunities were missed in the autumn of last year. The English too now appear to be actually holding back. Their geographical position permits of their doing that without the objective of their fleet miscarrying. England is influencing the neutrals more and more to shut us out. If England's prestige at sea was shaken, Italy would not think of ranging herself against us. At one o'clock I went to table and sat next the Kaiserin; from here she goes to Strasburg, then to Karlsruhe, back to Berlin. . . . She said that the removal of main Headquarters to Berlin was not to be thought of. The Kaiser may be going for eight or ten days to Silesia. I intend therefore to come to Berlin on the 27th. Djavid Bey and the Turkish General were present. The Kaiser talks of Falkenhayn as the coming leader of allied armies, thus Hindenburg nowhere.

The *Frankfürter Zeiting* publishes to-day a long

article, wherein it depicts Russia as the only enemy with whom we are to keep up lasting hostilities, because of its natural strength, and the Slav hordes pressing on us. More cleverly written than the Mont article, perhaps by my "friend" Stein, at all events inspired by the Foreign Office. I am getting already numbers of congratulations on my jubilee which really are appalling.

KUXHAVEN,
May 12th.

We left Wilhelmshaven at 10.30, with two very fast torpedo boats; through ships, barricades, outposts . . . here. The sea was calm. At about twelve we touched Heligoland, where the last time I was expected with Trara. M. would be astonished at all the changes there. The island's present aspect makes an extraordinary impression; no Heligolanders, no bathing visitors, no women and no children, nothing but men armed to the teeth. On the whole Heligoland has not counted so much in the war as we used to think it would. The war in the North Sea has taken such very different developments. There was hardly a breath of wind, the sun was warm, but the air like steel. At two o'clock dinner in the Casino, which was very prettily and comfortably arranged. The spacious dining-room was full to the last place, only the commanders were officers on active service, for the rest, mostly reserve officers, of all trades and professions. A good tone and spirit of comradeship seemed to prevail. Admiral Jacobsen launched a speech at me

which I naturally was obliged to answer, and which I concluded mentally with the catch phrase, "Heligoland—Ostend." At four o'clock, put off. I think we got here at seven and drove by motor to Nordholz, our air-force base. Two years ago there was nothing but bare wild heath, now aerodromes, roads, etc. Our air-forces are at any rate in good hands.

KIEL,
May 13th.

Prince Henry received me at the station, and came back at once to the hotel with me. After half an hour's pause came on to the castle, the Princess Fräulein von Plänker (lady-in-waiting), Sackendorff (Court-Marshal), Captain Z. S. Heinrich, Captain Westerkampf. The Princess amazingly well-informed, she is the organizer of a gigantic work in the hospitals. Early yesterday out *Germania, Kaiserliche Wirft,* S.M.S. *Kron Prinz* (Dalwigk), torpedo inspection, formation-inspection (Rebour), submarine inspection, submarine commandants of small U-boats flashed out altogether, also the torpedo-boat command made an excellent impression. This is the war of the captain and the lieutenant. Many admirals have failed, partly because of ill-luck, partly because of Müller. The navy swarms with sailors. Fine fellows, these guardians of the sea, and they aren't allowed to come into action. In the evening I invited Rebour, Henkel, Dalwigk, Siemens (submarine inspection), Trotha, and my colleagues. Conversation fluent and all very agree-

able. X. infuriated with Pohl, who does all he can to find pretexts for doing nothing, especially is he keen on finding technical deficiencies. The Prince is going to fetch me again—9 o'clock to 12 a.m.

WILHELMSHAVEN,
July 13th.

The day has been uselessly spent. It is now going on toward eight o'clock. I have invited Admiral Kraft and a few submarine commandants. Yesterday long discussion with Y. Everywhere general indignation expressed at the mismanagement in the navy. Eighty per cent. of public opinion want me. There's to be a deputation to His Majesty. In spite of that I play the part of Horatius Cockles, for the hour for acting has gone by. Of course I would accept, but only under the condition of being allowed full power. But for this I would extend myself. Pohl has simply gambled chances away, as Captain L. said. Not only his staff, but everywhere, they are crying out for me.

All the baiting seems to have completely ceased, and to-morrow *crucifise*. I derive a certain satisfaction from it all. I don't believe H.M. will do it, but God must decide. It will be a life-long lesson for Müller.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 20th.

I shall certainly be here for a fortnight, then perhaps off to the eastern front. Hindenburg has too much on hand at the moment for me to visit him just

yet. And first of all I'll see how things go here. Our guards are now facing the Russian guards who have been brought to the front from Petersburg. It is being presumed therefrom that the Russians are compelled to use their last men there.

Falkenhayn has told Bachmann that the Chancellor wants to annex Courland; the English will take pleasure in that, for then we shall sit tight, for a hundred years, and the Russians the same. England laughs in her sleeve; and we are to withdraw from Belgium. Then England will have gained her object, and we shall be reduced to a mere second-class continental State again. To Falkenhayn the people in Turkey and the Balkans are quite a matter of indifference. The whole set round the Kaiser has slowly gone to sleep, and the Kaiser fills in the map himself.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 22nd.

Bachmann had a talk yesterday with Müller. The latter is obviously uneasy about the whole situation at sea. The question of the High Command has cropped up again. I doubt, however, if the choice will fall on me. Müller said yesterday that he had at the beginning of the war striven for something of the kind, but couldn't bring it off. Again on January 2nd he had once more called on the Kaiser and named me, but had failed utterly. The Kaiser doesn't really require any High Command, he can himself see to that.

This version doesn't seem to me very credible. For

if Müller had really wished it, he would certainly have been obliged to speak to me on the subject first. He not only didn't do this, but he put Pohl in Ingenohl's place without so much as litsening to me. To Bachmann, moreover, he seems to have said on February 2nd, that before me younger officers would come into consideration, who had not been out of it for so long as I had; such, for example, as Holtzendorff. During the conversation between Bachmann and Müller yesterday, my name was not mentioned. In another, he did casually remark that Pohl and I could not work together, and he believed in the first as an expert. We have all been trembling with anxiety as to whether we are going to yield further to America.

EMANUELSSEGEN BEI
KATTOWITZ,
July 23rd.

Enver has sent a dispatch to Falkenhayn, which according to my estimation is marked by a threatening tone.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 24th.

I can't, for my part, form any conception of how we are to force Russia to make peace. The "chasm" is too wide, but we can always press onwards. It must be a joy to England that her two most formidable rivals are tearing each other to pieces. Russia will wait, and we shall not get many troops free to send to the west, even if we halt on the line of

the Berg. Captain Eric von Müller has been here since yesterday; he, too, is a little aghast at the way in which we continue to neglect Turkey. He announces, on the other hand, that the internal condition of England is favourable to us. Hence the enormous exertions in the Dardanelles; if these surrender, the whole of the Balkans will be let loose upon us. Falkenhayn doesn't see that, and the whole of our policy should be directed against England. Without the assistance of Italy, Gallipoli will be difficult to capture.

Two more submarines are now on their way there. But before three weeks they can hardly make their presence felt, and in them alone lies the hope of doing something. Kämpf, Westarp, and Bassermann wish to beard the Kaiser personally about Turkey and the submarines. They won't achieve much. To-day we are expecting the Note. The pantaloons of the Wilhelmstrasse must be in a thoughtful frame of mind. In the case of the Note being rude, Bethmann, Jagow, and company will say, "We have the navy to thank for that."

EMANUÉLSSEGEN,
July 2nd.

America is so shamelessly, so barefacedly pro-British, that it is hard to credit that we shall eat humble-pie. Yet in this connection, I believe nothing to be impossible.

A remark in the Note indicates that we have already made promises, privately, to limit the submarine ac-

tivity. But now it is a question of a formal declaration before the whole world, and before the whole German people. The answer can take weeks to get there. I, for my part, will not join in a formal renunciation of the submarine warfare, whereby we should abandon the only weapon we have in our hands against England in the future. The relief of Muktar Pasha, and the refusal on Falkenhayn's side to do anything to help Turkey, weighs equally on my mind. Meanwhile England's pressure on the neutrals becomes stronger every day, and we are playing at Napoleonism in Poland.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 26th.

To-day at ten o'clock to Teschen, the headquarters of the Archbishop Frederick. The scenery in Galicia is very pretty, we had the Beskidian group of mountains in front of us. We were welcomed with great friendliness in Teschen; absolutely harmless old gentleman with whom Conrad von Holtzendorff can have no difficulty in dealing. Afterwards we were received by the heir to the throne, who is very youthful, but evidently has interests. . . . Grand staff, to whom we were introduced. I heard nothing but Count So-and-So, Count this, that, and the other. At breakfast I sat next the Commander-in-Chief, who is very proud of his only son. The latter has just got through his exam. both in German and Hungarian. His father (brother of the Dowager-Queen of Spain) owns much

property in Hungary. He told me, his nephew, the King of Spain, had written that he had been offered hundreds of millions if he would join the quadruple Allies, but said so long as he was King he wouldn't hear of it. Moreover he had his army to support him. Everyone was incensed in Teschen by the effrontery of the American Note, and couldn't conceive that we should be so weak as to draw back. (If only that sentiment were shared by our pantaloons in office!) It is hoped that the line on the Isonzo may be held; but it's not certain. Unfortunately Conrad was absent, he had been ordered to Vienna. I should have been glad to have made the acquaintance of the most interesting personality connected with these headquarters. I haven't much faith in Kämpf's doing anything effectual with the Kaiser. We have heard nothing yet from Berlin about the Note. Müller is in Berlin to consult with Capelle.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 27th.

A year ago yesterday I arrived in Berlin, and was received with the announcement that all was going well. I had then no confidence in peace, and unfortunately my prognostications proved to be right. Now we have already left 500,000 men lying dead on the battle-fields, and over a million wounded. Besides, there is no end in view to this frightful war. I think too that the aggressively harsh tone of the Note promises nothing good for us. We have heard nothing

definite as yet from Berlin. Herr Kriege,[1] it seems, has entirely turned round about the submarines. He doubtless thinks that his time has come, and a new democracy is in the making. The efforts on the part of old Kämpf and his companions, with the Kaiser, have been defeated, or rather have defeated themselves. The reason is not known to me; some other plan is now to be set on foot, in which I am to have a part. To-morrow I shall know more about it. No consultation has taken place in Berlin, after all, between Capelle and Admiral von Müller. From that and other news, I conclude that matters with regard to the fleet are still the same as of old.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 28th.

To-day I had a letter from Capelle. He writes that Admiral von Müller has obviously avoided, on purpose, conferring with him, and that he considers the creation of a Commander-in-Chief for the navy shelved. If the American Note should not be answered, the submarines and their work will perish of inanition. I don't think it at all likely that any acute crisis will arise in which I could come to the fore. Capelle is very troubled about Turkey. How we shall bear this severe political slap in the face, he doesn't know. He is sceptical too about Russia's giving in.

We have had a new circumstantial dispatch from the first officer on the *Mainz*, of the fight of August

[1] Legal adviser at the Foreign Office.

28th. I will send it to you. The *Mainz* fought brilliantly, but *pro nihilo*. An exchanged prisoner, a doctor, had learnt the dispatch by heart, and wrote it down afterwards in Germany.

All efforts which have been made by politicians and others to induce Falkenhayn to take Austria in hand and teach her discipline have been in vain. Here we see and hear little from Pless. I have therefore reconsidered my plan of going to Dantzig. Yesterday I wrote to Hindenburg, and told him that I would pay him a visit directly he had finished his present task. He was at any rate in calm waters again.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 29th.

This morning I had a letter from Bassermann, who tells me that a proclamation from the All Highest is to be issued on August 1st, which is likely to prove something of a fiasco in spite of a fanfare of trumpets. It was to contain the announcement that we were not carrying on a war of conquest. Further words to the effect that we had no intention of enlarging our frontiers, and were ready to make peace, had been afterwards crossed out. Bassermann thinks that such a proclamation (a confession practically of our defeat) would make the very worst possible impression, both at home and abroad. He entreated me to prevent the making public of its contents. It is true that all such inspired utterances and pamphlets tend in the same direction. I telephoned at once to Berlin, to procure

further authority, then I went to Pless. But the Chancellor had already left for Berlin. In Pless I called on Wild von Hohenboen, who knew nothing about the above subject, but was shocked when I told him. But meanwhile I did not consider the authority I got sufficient with which to approach Bethmann, much less the Kaiser. Bethmann could easily repudiate the interpretation as an insult. Wild von Hohenboen appeared to be dissatisfied with the news from Russia, where all has not succeeded so well as was hoped, hence no surrendering and the prospect of Russia settling down permanently, and we likewise congealing. At the opening of the campaign, Russia might have given in at the first bid, but not now. Then we had a long talk on the subject of Turkey; he takes the state of things there very seriously. At six o'clock Müller has appointed to see me. I don't know what he wants. In all probability to talk about subordinate *personnel,* connected with Admiralty business.

With reference to the official report of the fighting on the *Mainz* on August 28th, one can gather from it how strong our fleet was, and how it would have disinguished itself at the beginning of the war if it had been put to the test.

Müller has been, and the upshot of the visit was much what I anticipated. He knew about the proclamation, but disputed the contents. The Chancellor too is still undecided as to whether they shall be allowed to stand. A dispatch from our military attaché in Athens represents the Greeks as resenting

intimidation on the part of England, who wants to force Greece into the war. According to their newspapers, they are displaying more pluck in this respect than Holland.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 30th.

You will, of course, have read the article in the *Kreuz Zeitung* of yesterday which criticises the proposed tendency of the proclamation. Müller conferred to-day with Treutler, who naturally expressed himself very pleased at the whole tone of the proclamation, and saw nothing in it to find fault with. For the rest, Müller carefully kept off the subject of the American Note.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
July 31st.

Letters from J. and U. just to hand. They are, with justice, infuriated about the Note and the conduct of our affairs. A change can only come about if Falkenhayn, Bethmann, Jagow, Müller, and all their crew go. In fact a clean sweep is wanted of the whole bad system. I am not in a position to work it alone. The political parties when they went over to Bethmann, on account of the submarine question, fell, although they knew the saying, "march separately, fight together." Even so the press is about to veer round. Behuke writes, beside himself, over the deterioration of the submarine activity in consequence of the limitations imposed on it. As U. writes, the

fact that the submarines have functioned, so to speak, has doubtless been hidden from America. I have from the first always stuck out for energetic measures towards America, but could, however, never achieve more than *per far figure,* as the ways and means of acting did not lie in my department. Later I will tell U. of my one to two hours' audience with the Chancellor. I convinced him to a certain degree. But twelve hours afterwards he had turned round. How little reliance is to be placed on parliamentarians is demonstrated by the National Liberals being in the act of turning their coat on the Belgian question. What is now the public opinion of which U. writes that it is running high? The revolution in the leadership of our grand but too modest people can only be brought about by men who are free to act. Neither the army nor the navy can do it. I don't mean to say by that, all cannot work together. But one can't go and shout on the housetops when one has resigned office. For me it is particularly hard, when I reflect on the hurrahs of the enemy elicited by the possibility of my retirement and its consequent effects. In this connection I may remark that Wild von Hohenboen at my recent interview expressed himself strongly about my and Bachmann's attempted resignations; he said that for his part he couldn't understand such conduct on our side . . . obviously he very much disapproved of it. U. is also at one with me in saying that we must, wherever possible, watch for succeess in the east.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 1st.

We drove to Pless to solemnize in the church the anniversary of the outbreak of war. Little gathering in front of the castle. I told His Majesty that he should console himself by looking into the future; all would certainly go well yet, if we only stood "firm." H.M. said that of course we should stand "firm." I heard from the aide-de-camp that the proclamation had been published. We then went into the tiny church, which was full to the door. The pastor gave out that the collection was for the Red Cross. The service was very reverent and uplifting, and taken by a very old clergyman, simple, to the point, and certainly his own convictions. "Till now the Lord has helped us; understand, dear brothers and sisters, He has helped us. God desires it of us that we too should *help ourselves to the utmost,* in the purest sense, and then He would help," etc. H.M. talked on the way back from church to the castle, again about the Second Punic war, with which he evidently comforted himself. I combated the view as much as I possibly could. After that fearful struggle there was a long pause of from fifty to a hundred years; all we had to think about now was how *this* war was to end. The fine old pastor divided his discourse into two parts, Retrospective and Prospective. With regard to the prospects he said, "Enormous exertions are still in front of us, in order to overthrow our enemies, and then

will come the heavy trial of peace negotiations. Then shall we not say: 'Till now the Lord has helped us'? but we shall also say, 'Be not afraid, the Lord is with Thee.'" It was much to be regretted that Treutler wasn't there. Pohl has again been trying through his first "aide" to succeed in doing what Prince Adalbert failed recently to achieve at Charleville. He wants to get a command issued for the fleet to stay in. Müller now finds this desire on Pohl's part very reasonable. Bachmann was enraged, but unluckily possesses little power in spite of his nominally influential post. Should Müller and the Kaiser continue to hold fast by this opinion, then Trotha has a very poor prospect of succeeding in his exertions. The Court-Chamberlain von X. took a turn with me in front of the castle, and told me that the Kaiser had again spoken in an appreciative tone of me, and said that in the years before the war and at its outbreak I was the only one who had recognized the danger existing with regard to England. Then X. said we had better not chat together longer or it would rouse suspicion. There were only Treutler, Valentine, Lyncker, and Plessen outside the castle. Isn't that a sign of the glass house that I inhabit?

It is reported that three Prussian officers have been court-martialled and shot by the French for a mere trifling offence. Wild suggests threatening reprisals. Bethmann is against, the Kaiser in favour. Bethmann thought it would be too brutal. Wild was going to

confer with Treutler on the matter, and is furious about it. Now you see from this what sort of society it is of which the Kaiser is the centre.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 2nd.

The Declaration of London is less favourable for us than U. imagines. It all turns on the idea of free exports. According to definitions hitherto existing, there is no equivalent in it for the giving up by us of the submarine warfare. I have had a message from Hindenburg with thanks for my letter and "Letter will follow."

No news from the east. Prince Eitel has written that the footguards again have had heavy casualties. One could put up with that if there was any certainty to look forward to of ultimate success in the east, Surely to obtain this it would be worth while stirring ourselves up to confiding the whole business to Hindenburg. Oh *vanitas vanitatum.*

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 3rd.

We have picked up flash-light decrees according to which the English send out "armed parties" to the neutral ships, and then attack with them our submarines. If the limitations aren't abolished, our U-boats can't go on for long like this. We are planning new proposals in this connection. Really I cannot see why our officials at the Foreign Office should make us so cheap now, and bow their knees. We have made con-

cessions far beyond the bounds of justice and have had our ears boxed before the whole world more than once. That's all the easier for the Yankees to do, because they have doubtless heard from Jagow of the limitations of our submarine war, and now the English will know it too and be jubilant. Their trade will improve again. Concerning Russia, Wild von Hohenboen has told me without any instigation that at the beginning of the "push" in Galicia, if we had tried, we could have treated with Russia and success would have been probable, but now now. People in touch with Falkenhayn, however, think that Petersburg can scarcely hold out the winter, and Turkey, on the other hand, may go to pieces. Roumania as before is quite inaccessible, and the idea is to use threats towards her. Whether that is right, from a military point of view, I'm not in a position to say. Politically it is right to act vigorously with Austria. One cherishes for her a tremendous, and to my mind quite unjustifiable respect. Hindenburg has sent me a very friendly invitation. I intend to start on Thursday the 5th. As he is said to eschew all politics, I fear my mission will not be very fruitful in results. But I shall try to make the Belgian and English questions clear to him from my standpoint.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 4th.

Through the excitement caused by the proclamation in Berlin, I take it as a certainty that it has undergone

alterations. Thus I am all the more enraged at the whole Bethmann-inspired press interpreting the actual words of the proclamation in a different sense from what they are meant to convey. It is at the same time so crassly stupid to understate the significance of our pugnacious guarantees, even if the Chancellor doesn't intend to hold to them. It is not a question, in all conscience, of exploiting the spirit of our people for the time that is to come after the war, but in every eventuality to influence the market at the conclusion of peace in our favour. I haven't much faith in the Reichstag's influence since it turned tail about the submarine question. I cannot altogether say that Capelle advised me badly on the U-boat affair. He had politely agreed to my, at that time, proffered resignation,[1] and in the answer it is confirmed that Bethmann and Falkenhayn had crippled the submarine warfare, and the existence of the actual proffer of resignation is proved.

I send you the *Frankfürter Zeitung*. The whole Chancellor press is now tending towards the retention of Courland in order to compensate the German people for the loss of Belgium. In the east we have made good progress to-day. The granting of a loan to Bulgaria by Berlin and Vienna may be regarded at least as a *rapprochement,* and it seems to me further emphasized by the fact that a Bulgarian military attaché was present—so I have just been told—at the presentation of the terms of agreement to the General Staff. But I shall not believe in those fellows till they have

[1] In June, 1915, after the *Lusitania* Note.

fired a shot. It would be too refreshing after so many disappointments, and might constitute a real turning-point.

The chief cause of my position in Charleville being further embittered is that Pohl goes about everywhere stirring up animus against me.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 5th.

Ah, it is indeed well that my old master did not live to see this war, and my position in relation to it. The tone that prevails in the fleet is, I hear, everywhere despairing. But Trotha will not be able to alter anything. There exists a regular constellation of personalia unfavourable to me: the Kaiser, who won't give me up to the fleet, the Cabinet chiefs, the men round Bethmann, and also Falkenhayn. He does not answer Hindenburg's purpose, who, in spite of that, keeps him at the rudder. Warsaw is said to have fallen, but there is no official confirmation of these reports. Nicholas N. is a fine chap; the whole High Command of the Russian army, admirable though in organization, officers, industry, etc., doesn't come up to ours. The farther we penetrate into Russia, the better pleased are the English. It is quite true that the more we progress eastwards, the more our policy is guided in the same direction. There is no longer any doubt that the Chancellor and the Kaiser too, and the folk *autour de lui,* are coming to the decision of giving up Belgium at once. An article in the *Kreuz*

Zeitung made me suspicious of this some time ago. I have had a document drawn up by the Admiralty which deals with England's and our economic questions. The inquiry is very satisfactory for us, especially after the installation of the submarines, though in accordance with our orders these have fallen off in the Atlantic. I believe too that England will by degrees accommodate herself better to the situation. Our people have rendered splendid assistance in this past year of war, but whether it can go till a sound peace has been obtained for us is doubtful; the superiority of forces against us is so enormous, and our policy so bad. The whole of North America must practically be numbered among our enemies. If there existed in Switzerland any lofty consciousness of Europe's future shaping, she would participate actively, but she is no more likely to do it than Sweden, although her entry would, without any doubt, settle everything. Sweden, according to my calculations, could be won over, if we set about it in the right way.

I have an admirable coadjutor in Mann, and can wholly rely on him. The longer I work with him, the greater is my confidence in him, which is saying a great deal. It has never been the same in an equal degree with Capelle. Not that I haven't a high opinion of his shrewdness and parliamentary knowledge, which I have always valued. Just at present he is partly, in spite of himself, influenced by the circumstance that he is undoubtedly destined to be my successor. F. E. belongs to those Germans who invariably boil

over from sentimental or other motives. The saying of the Great Frederick with regard to the art of politics is certainly right. ("The great art in politics is not to swim against the stream, but to turn all events to one's own advantage.") But it is not applicable to the moment when action should have been taken, and I have stood out for these questions during the war and have beaten my head against the wall which surrounds the Kaiser (see Clausewitz on the catastrophe of 1806). What would have happened to me if I too had locked myself inside that wall? I alone should not have had the power to break through it. In 1813 it was broken in from the outside, and then even enough was left of it to deprive Prussia of some of the fruits of her terrific exertions.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 6th.

Rejoicings over the fall of Warsaw are only half-hearted. As a matter of fact, we have taken only the western half, and that affords proof that the Russian army has, in reality, slipped away and escaped being enveloped. At last, the Highest Command of the army have convinced themselves that something must be done for Turkey, and by way of Serbia too. A train of circumstances has led up to this conclusion. Bachmann addressed an urgent letter to Falkenhayn on the subject of Turkey. Also our ambassador in Roumania has advised against a hostile attitude to her. Austria wants too to go for Serbia. I have

only been able to help a little, in an indirect way. We ought, in my opinion, to cut off Roumania economically, and give her the cold shoulder entirely. The stupid part of it is that we have got wheat lying in Roumania for which we have paid in advance; an incredible piece of blindness. But I hope all will come right if Turkey can be kept going. Our two new submarines are on the way. May the Lord protect them; I don't know whether England has got wind of them. The coast in Flanders is guarded more strongly than ever. Massing of troops continues to take place in the Dardanelles, on islands taken from Greece. Have you read the National Liberals' Vote of Confidence? It assures downfall. But one can put little faith in their stability. The third publication in the *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen* of dispatches from the Belgian Ambassador is again stupendous. It is a source of wonder to me that the Foreign Office allow them to be published. Can't we see as clearly as these gentlemen? If any one of us had entertained such views before the war, he would have been the *bête-noir* of the Wilhelmstrasse. The dispatches are expressive of the veriest scorn of our constant scrapping. While England's elaborate preparations for war were going on, for our navy since 1909 no sum at all had been voted. What a different *début* the navy would have made in the war if the whole amount (tale) of 1912 had been granted instead of 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 yearly being squandered by the Treasury and Chancellor! The Belgian gentlemen foresaw

quite correctly that the fleet as a bogy for the mob would be used solely as a pretext by Grey and company. Our increasing superiority over the English in trade and industries—in short, the greed for monopolies, and sheer envy, were the causes. We wobbled and wavered. Russia we incensed by our recent Balkan policy. That was what U. noticed in the utterances of Prince Gagarin. The blunder is hardly to be repaired, and we are being driven forward into lasting hostilities with Russia.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 7th.

Yesterday the Chancellor led me a dance once more. Vexation over it gave me a sleepless night. This morning I went to Pless for an audience with Bethmann. Helfferich (secretary to the Treasury), has directed a long epistle—perhaps by order—to Bethmann. Helfferich (Secretary to the Treasury), has abandonment of the submarine warfare, but a communication to Wilson to that effect. The Chancellor is calling in Falkenhayn and Müller to help him. In principle the Kaiser has also been won over. The affair will be managed so that the Kaiser via Müller gives express instructions to the submarines and these will be conveyed secretly to Wilson. It is the same thing over again, though this time the German public is supposed to have been prepared, owing to me. I have never concealed my attitude. Toward the end of the month you may expect me in Blasien. First of

all a dispatch from Bernstorff is expected, who, as I remarked to Bethmann, is sure to sing in the same key. I believe that the whole affair has been arranged according to plan. Whether anything will come of my journey to the east remains to be seen. I am depressed in soul. All trouble and efforts seem to have been in vain.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 8th.

Heavy fighting has been going on since yesterday in the Dardanelles. The English know, without doubt, that our submarines there are not available yet for action. In consequence they have brought all their ships there and have opened a frightful bombardment on all the forts and all the positions. The situation is obviously very critical. How earnestly I have urged, alas! in vain, that more of our submarines should be sent thither, and at greater speed. Should the Dardanelles fall, then the world-war has been decided against us.

This morning at 11.30 renewed audience with His Majesty, who told me, to begin with, that he did not want to send a reply Note to America. He would of course leave himself a loophole. Bernstorff's dispatch was now being awaited. Müller has bowed entirely to the opinion of the Chancellor. We have in front of us an affair which has been planned out for weeks beforehand. The bankers too have been involved in it. Afterwards, a long political discussion.

The Kaiser was less gracious to me, whether in consequence of the attitude I have taken up, I don't know. *Müller pretends that the Kaiser knows nothing definite about the conversations between me and Bethmann.*

Wild von Hoen has been kept informed by Bachmann and is furious about the whole affair. Bethmann has promised me that before taking further steps he will consult me. It appears that through my action time has been gained, and that is of some value. The Crown Prince has been sounded.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 9th.

Müller was closeted with me for two and a half hours, and I have worked on him strongly. For the time being I have convinced him, but for how long is another question. I start the day after to-morrow for Berlin, stay there a day, and then to Hindenburg.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 10th.

This morning at Pless, His Majesty with many kind words handed me the order *pour le merité,* in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the annexation of Heligoland, with special congratulations on the efficiency of the ports and defences there. Admiral Müller was asked to fasten it on me. Whether it was the result of the two hours and a half conversation, I don't know, but would rather think not, as my invitation—without Bachmann—had come previously. I told Müller that I was very much touched, but

could take little pleasure in the events attending the present course of the war at sea. Besides, through it the resolve I had communicated to him would be rendered more difficult for me. Müller thought it arose from the latest attitude of the Chancellor. On my asking further, if the Kaiser were likely to stand firm, he said that he thought yes. I had, however, the feeling that Müller might be running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. For the moment the danger seems averted, unless another *Lusitania* case comes to pass, which, judging from the conduct of Treutler, seems to be in the air. My attitude, in the event of Helfferich's proposals falling through, was moreover as categorical as anyone could desire. Now the matter of Notes and what is connected with them has so fallen out that we can resume submarine activity to the utmost of our capacity, as soon as the war on land shapes itself more favourably; thus my staying on has been of some use. If Helfferich had pressed his point and gained it, then it would not have been possible. The relations of Pohl to Müller have certainly been severely strained. The latter says that directly we are secure against new enemies by land, we must resume the submarine warfare ruthlessly. Always up and down! In many respects it would be useful to continue my sojourn here, in spite of that—*nota bene,* against the advice of Capelle. I shall not let myself be detained, but travel to-morrow to Berlin and in the evening of the next day to Lötzen. Müller urges me strongly to speak without any reserve to

Hindenburg. Müller and many others are not satisfied with Falkenhayn, and neither is Hindenburg. Great losses through frontal attacks, but no pulverizing of Russia. The latter has of course had immense casualties, though without sustaining any perceptible damage. The old Arch-duke and several Austrians present, among them Conrad von Hätzendorff, with whom I could have talked much longer if I hadn't been so closely observed by the Kaiser. Young Knorr has carried out a brilliant mine-laying operation. An English fast cruiser destroyed in combat, and such-like. He came back towards our coast and there was taken prisoner. Pohl has again omitted to provide a base for the damaged cruiser which Knorr commanded. He had a crew of 120 men, 40 English prisoners, with 4 officers on board. After the sinking of his ship he reached a Swedish schooner (the *Eyster Tiet*) with 130 men. Further particulars are still unknown. Bulgaria, according to my opinion, won't make any signs of friendship so long as our guns are silent on the Danube; still Bulgaria has already to some extent shown her hand.

BERLIN,
August 12th.

A day of intense heat in Berlin. I shall have to leave at ten o'clock for Lötzen. Here little that is satisfactory. Command in the navy all at sixes and sevens; the Kaiser, Müller, Pohl, Prince Henry, and so on. The fleet again let slip an opportunity when Knorr

came back. In the east, hazardous operations with absolutely no prospect of success. Roumania, *before* defining her attitude, given a sum of 400,000,000 marks for wheat and is making a long nose at us, and Turkey in continual danger, and no relief in prospect for her through Falkenhayn. Peace-talk in the *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen,* which will generally be interpreted as weakness. The Chancellor has a cue for me in mind, *i.e.* peace at any price, England not to be irritated; action of submarines only to be postponed till after the Reichstag, because the preparations are not yet sufficient and not yet ripe for ruin. Trotha has written in despair.

This morning I had a long talk with Rosicke, I believe satisfactory. He was profoundly astonished when I explained my views to him and declared the arch-enemy to be Trust magnates in New York, London, and Paris, who had imbibed the idiotic pan-Slavism stunt. He hadn't expected any such opinion from me, as in the Reichstag I had always supported the Left. I told him that as I was merely tolerated at my post, standing alone and opposed from every side (outside Parliament), I had accepted any help I could get.

Tableau I. He stood out for big agricultural acquisitions in the east as a counter-blast against any increase of Belgian industries. Later I met Count Taube.[1] He was very pleased to see me. I stirred up Müller to take Count Taube to the Kaiser, owing

[1] Swedish Ambassador in Berlin.

to my departure. I can't do anything further, which is to be regretted.

LÖTZEN,
August 13th.

To-day at ten o'clock in the morning arrived here. Long conversation with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, complete convergence of views on the situation as a whole. Hindenburg sees no prospect of altering the state of things, *autour du roi.* The "mass" was too impenetrable. He had implored the Kaiser not to follow the counsels of von F. Also in the last great operations he had urgently advised against the strategy which always went on attacking from the front, so that the Russians by this method were able to slip away, and which had cost us enormous losses. According to Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's opinion, the whole Russian army would have been captured three weeks ago if they had been pursued. He had written to the Kaiser to the effect that the whole German people who had rendered such grand assistance looked up to their Kaiser, but mistrusted the strategy and leadership of the High Command . . . all to no purpose. After that I can't wonder that I have achieved so little, though Hindenburg strikes me as having, in spite of all, a consciousness of having performed something great, the memory of which he will carry with him to the grave. It is touching to see how the people here honour him, young and old; the aged granddames and young mothers hush the

children in awe and all salute as he comes along. He can hardly move for flowers. The loyalty, trustworthiness, and simplicity of his character are positively refreshing after one comes from the cursed crew of intriguers at Pless. I have spoken straight from my heart; and he and Ludendorff likewise. He will give me all the support he can for Turkey and the submarines. We are at one on the question of Belgium and Russia, but the fact remains that Falkenhayn has the power in his hand. Group Hindenburg, group Prince Leopold, group Mackensen, all are subject to Falkenhayn.

This afternoon, beautiful trip and walk round a portion of the lake and through the Boyen forts . . . explanation of the Russian position. The fellows had been here, devilish close, and ruins marked the places they had temporarly conquered. Very pleasant gathering at mess. I am well entertained and look forward with pleasure to travelling to-morrow in my saloon-carriage to Memel, and from there on by motor to Libau. Nine hours by motor from here would have been a little too much. Besides in my saloon-carriage (special train) I can read and finish my letters for the post, but in the next few days you will get no letters from me as I shall at earliest not be able to post to you before August 17th. It is already rather autumnal here.

Morning early. At about 8 A.M. Hindenburg fetches me for a walk. He said when I remarked on the greetings everywhere of the population in all the vil-

lages and hamlets, "Yes, the people are touchingly devoted, but I would gladly do without some of that if my Imperial master would be a little less distant with me."

Supper very delightful. Further talk with Ludendorff.

In Special Train, Lötzen to Memel.
August 14th.

It really was refreshing to spend a whole day in the society of that little circle at Lötzen (a society of brothers, as Hindenburg expressed it). This morning from 8 till 9.30 I took a glorious walk with Hindenburg. The lake-landscape—with its beautiful woods, its undulating fertile country, the lakes, which flashed like opals in the evening light, and in the morning like floods of silver—revealed itself in really enchanting beauty; the air crisp, and yet not at all chilly. Hindenburg entirely shares my outlook and estimate of the state of affairs. He swore to the Kaiser in Posen that he would make things different. But His Majesty had previously been instructed by Falkenhayn in the minutest details, and told Hindenburg he was mistaken, etc. Now we have sustained huge losses and have not achieved the destruction of the enemy, as was once within the bounds of probability, and we are being driven slowly and surely into a war of defence. After the first extensive successes on this front, we ought to have made the best use of the superiority in our railways, and thrown our

armies in massed formations on the Left Wing, as the Right, owing to big distances and defective railway communications, could not be utilized for that purpose. He still holds this would be the right thing to do, even though the whole gigantic success may no longer be possible, and only on the day before yesterday sent a vigorously worded telegram to Falkenhayn to this effect, in order to be quite loyal to Falkenhayn, and not to the Kaiser. He hoped that Falkenhayn may yet grasp the idea. Is not all this too fearful? Here is the man who can lead soldiers and generals, who would be capable of putting everything straight and bringing to the Kaiser himself the fame of an overwhelming victory, and he is intentionally shunted on one side. I was entertained with the heartiest kindness and courtesy in Lötzen. Hindenburg made a speech which abashed me, but for which I returned thanks on the spot. I closed with the hope that as once the sun had risen in the east for Prussia in its darkest hour, so now in these serious times for Germany and Prussia it would rise again. I made no secret here of the fact that the fleet had been intentionally and craftily held back. I talked over my position with Hindenburg, without the least reserve. He approved of my conduct; I could not go to the Kaiser and say, "Give me the fleet." Nothing would prevent Hindenburg from coming to the station to see me off at 10.45. Ludendorff declared likewise that it was impossible to effect a change in the situation. For the rest Hindenburg promised to write to Bethmann

and urge him vigorously to do something in the interests of Turkey, and the submarines. I send you his motto, which Ludendorff gave me at the station.

By 4 P.M. we were in Memel, then three hours by motor to Libau. The Russians have plundered here in a terrible manner, and have outraged many girls; some run about half mad, others have drowned themselves. Helfferich's scheme is already known in Berlin and considered by Westarp and Bassermann to be extremely dangerous.

DANTZIG,
August 15th.

To-days news came of an air-raid on London, the sinking of a light cruiser and of a destroyer in the North Sea. Also the torpedoing of a big transport ship in the Ægean Sea, by a little U-boat, isn't bad. That is all the more satisfactory as I cannot see any proper objective for our operations in the Gulf of Riga, where the danger from Russian mines and submarines is very great—keeping in at all events produces not the least possible success. I haven't advised the Upper Command in the Baltic in vain against it.

Libau was very interesting. They have created a second Wilhelmshaven there, but when it was ready they found that Reval was a more suitable base for their object. A real Russian trick. The place contains about 70,000 to 80,000 inhabitants, and is the bathing place for Courland. For us, that is for the navy, Libau isn't of much value. The question of

Courland was debated with zeal, and our army chiefs there were in favour of keeping it; will too be difficult to leave it. There is of course no question of the majority of the population wishing to be Prussian. Perhaps certain Baltic barons form the exception to the rule, because they are afraid that if repatriated they would be hung by the Russians. On the other hand, no great difficulties would arise if Courland was converted into a "colony" for the next twenty years. The capture of Cracow and the advance of our army are in themselves certainly satisfactory occurrences, but in no way decisive. There is absolutely no certainty about the Balkans, and Turkey's case remains the grave danger.

DANTZIG,
August 19th.

Yesterday evening at the Crown Princess's. Very graciously received by her. The little princes drawn up in a row, and behind them the mother, who looked extraordinarily well and pretty. The house (a present from the shrewd town of Zoppot) is charmingly situated, and within is a real treasure house. The chief room on the ground floor, white with gold, opens on the terrace, whence there is a view of the whole bay beyond the shrubs and trees. We had half an hour's conversation alone. I expressed myself very frankly, and stood up especially for Hindenburg. Captain Mann told me that Prince Joachim had written to the Crown Princess a strong letter, asking her to

do all she could—at any rate as far as her husband was concerned—to support Hindenburg, who was being kept in the background, and then she added in English, *"just the same with our old navy man."* The Crown Princess told me that Falkenhayn had gained tremendous kudos of late through his victories in the east. I said they weren't the victories of Falkenhayn, but of the wearers of the field-gray uniform. In my opinion Hindenburg was undoubtedly in the right. Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and Hoffmann form a distinguished group who knew the skill of the Russians in getting out of a hole. Our position is such that we want something more than mere frontal victories with heavy losses. Affairs should be settled in three weeks at most. These three weeks for Greece, Roumania and Company may also be decisive. Let us hope all will yet go well, but the outlook is full of dangers.

Between Küstrin and Berlin (in the train),
August 19th.

In spite of the bumping of the train I should like to try to write you a few lines before I am seized by the claws of Berlin. I have only read extracts of the Chancellor's speech, as reported by telegram. It has been greeted with loud applause. What he said about the Freedom of the Seas is to my mind mere hot air; he will easily come to an understanding with England on *that* kind of freedom. The most important part of his speech was that which dealt with the

Polish question. We have been clearly making peace proposals to Russia; the foreign papers are full of it. The menace of a Poland free from Russia is used as a lever. There is confirmation from abroad that after Bethmann's speech Russia answered "No." In the east we have come to a standstill, at which England will be very pleased. I thought of staying a few days in Berlin to get information, then I go to Pless for an audience, and shall return soon after to Berlin. Capelle being seriously ill, I shall later have to prolong my stay in Berlin or nothing will be done at the office. I have quite understood U. in his application of the Declaration of London. But I was suspicious of a conclusion of peace, proclaiming it as Freedom of the Seas, which means England would get everything and Germany practically nothing.

BERLIN,
August 22nd.

The success of Bethmann and Helfferich renders my personal position very difficult. I fear that the *Arabic* affair will prove a further motive for an outburst against the submarines. If more restrictions follow, it will be an unfortunate moment for me to insist on my resignation. I have at most the Conservatives behind me. It will be said that now the first consideration should be help for Turkey, and that the rest can wait. From a military point of view that is not wrong. The difficulty lies in the question of how the unrestricted submarine campaign can be resumed

against England when it has once been interrupted. I pass, despite this, in the eyes of the people as a scapegoat, and, moreover, if the war goes on—and, judging from all accounts from England, it is to continue—they will perhaps in the winter be bound to come back to it.

I have now read the full report of Bethmann's speech, which has made a great impression because of the war aims, and therefore has raised his prestige. Everyone of course reads into it what suits him, but he has, all the same, bound himself still further. Before the speech the situation was different.

I was interrupted by Schulze [1] who has eight days' leave. It was a great relief to talk to him, especially on the submarine war in Flanders. He saw at once my unusually difficult position, but, in spite of it, he expressed the opinion that neither I nor the Kaiser could at this moment produce an effect. I am not so sure. The Chancellor has a good opportunity of either wringing my neck or breaking my back. I am not at all satisfied with our Riga expedition; against my express advice, which I telegraphed, it has taken place, and we have made ourselves ridiculous and suffered severe losses.

BERLIN,
August 24th.

You'll come short of news from me in these days. I am so stifled with calls and etiquette; in addition to

[1] Commander E. E. Schultze, Chief of Staff of the Naval Corps.

this many people have thought fit to write and congratulate me on a "Merité" which I don't acknowledge. I haven't yet heard how the *Arabic* affair is turning out. The gallant Barnabe[1] has just left me. He came to cross-question me about the torpedoing of two Spanish ships. We don't know anything about it, of course; if it was done by our submarines we must wait for their return before we can know anything for certain. Meanwhile the English press is making the most of it. Everything is permissible that the English do, but we may not do anything. You are quite right about Bethmann's long speech. If one could see behind the scenes, the policy of sentiment which we have been carrying on would be judged differently. But the German people are still sentimental, and so the speech made an impression. Our diplomats were naturally deplorable. But they have some excuse. They never had any "aim" set before them, and when they had, such as "brotherly love with England," it was a wrong one because unattainable. By the way, I am afraid that this idea is not dead even now. The creation of an independent Poland, etc., will make us enemies of Russia for the next hundred years, and vassalage under England may very easily arise from it. In Belgium, too, we are sentimental. Instead of playing off the Walloons against the Flemish we are uniting the country and encouraging a Belgian national feeling which did not exist before. In regard to commercial relations with

[1] Spanish Ambassador.

Japan, especially conciliation with the Japs, I have contributed towards this end in various ways. But it would lead me too far to enter on that question now. Owing to my attitude towards the Wilhelmstrasse, which perpetually rages against me, notwithstanding my restraint hitherto, I can't do much. The slightest hint is regarded there as an attack on their prerogative. The Wilhelmstrasse is headless, as a well-known American reporter says. This evening important conference between Jagow and Gerard. The latter of course knows that by bluff he can get all he wants. We have given way so much already that I suppose we shall certainly go on sliding.

To-day I called on Löbel to get information about things in general. He too was far from delighted with the long speech. According to his construction it was in the main directed against Russia, and the Chancellor practically said to England, "You have certainly been unfaithful to me and have behaved atrociously, yet for all that I am ready to take you again to my bosom." Or, in other words, "Leave Russia to me, and I will leave Belgium to you."

The affair in Riga is an instructive example of the confusion that prevails in the navy. We struck a wild blow in the air, and the Russians are crediting themselves with a great sea victory. I had urgently advised against it from Libau.

You are quite right in the idea that one should not struggle against circumstances, but adapt oneself to them and make the best of them. During this long

year I have become an expert in this. But now the thing is different. Bethmann and his set possess absolute power, and so does Falkenhayn. I am a thorn in the flesh to them all, and they won't let me have a say in anything. I am utterly powerless against them. The real cause of this, apart from the past, lies in the fact that I have never believed for a moment in a real understanding with England, and the policy of truckling to her I consider is now, as it always has been, senseless. Added to this, one is faced with the acute difficulties with neutrals that all naval war entails. I do not regard the subject simply from the point of view of how I am to get out of it. But there can be no doubt at all that my efforts have been systematically crippled. You are right in what you say about Bethmann's speech—"Thoroughly German," and, on that account, a success! The historian of fifty years hence will judge differently. I leave by the night train for Emanuelssegen. I am very sorry, in view of the present situation, to leave the Admiralty and Berlin. But it can't be helped. For me the illness of Capelle is a great misfortune.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 26th.

It was, as I had foreseen, a deliberately planned attack by the Chancellor on the submarines. Although I was with him in Berlin he didn't say a word about it. On the contrary, Jagow declared at the Budget Commission that the submarines wouldn't be interfered

with. Last night I received in Berlin the command, "To-morrow at 12 noon, audience." The Chancellor travelled by the same train; at Kattowitz Bachmann was awaiting me with the news that we were to go at once. I came here first, however, to put on my better uniform—Bethmann, Treutler, I, and Bachmann. The first gigantic, but he could do with a quiet sleep instead of perpetually sitting on a barrel of gunpowder. He is going to inform Wilson that the submarines had been ordered not to damage ships manned by Americans. We weren't agreed, as he was quite unapproachable; afterwards audience. Falkenhayn was cross-examined, Admiral von Müller ditto, the rest of the assembly nodded acquiescence all the time. But the Kaiser was displeased. He reviewed the range of the decision and agreed with us quietly that we must wait to hear further particulars of the last case. Falkenhayn had begun by seconding Bethmann very energetically, but when he saw that the Kaiser was not altogether that way inclined, changed his course towards the policy of waiting, followed by Müller. So no real decision was arrived at. Bethmann, furious, said after dinner to Bachmann that he would not take the responsibility, and would not leave Pless before the decision he wanted had been agreed to. Vanity and sensitiveness have a great deal to do with this. He is working now on a memorandum, and the Emperor will gave way under the pressure of the combined *camarilla,* there is no question about that. We are now trying to get Müller to come to-morrow to discuss the

possibility of a compromise. Bethmann wants to disclose the orders already issued. (Meanwhile no further orders are to be given.) But there is a difference between secret orders, which leave the English still in doubt as to what we are doing, and publicity. Then the great *Lusitania* case is to be submitted to a judicial inquiry and the Freedom of the Seas offered in the form of the famous Declaration. This passage in Bethmann's speech bears on the face of it the interpretation " England keeps everything, but we nothing." There is no doubt he is making for renunciation of Belgium and dismemberment of Russia by the establishment of autonomy in Poland. Frederick the Great and Bismarck must have turned in their graves. I have no faith in the voice of the army against this decision. It won't be heard until it is too late. What I shall do now I don't know, but I must wait and see how things turn out.

EMANUELSSEGEN,
August 27th.

Yesterday the Kaiser decided that the instructions for Bernstorff were to be discussed and arranged between the Chancellor and ourselves. Meanwhile, this morning, without summoning us, Bethmann got round the Kaiser. Müller and Treutler came to us this afternoon. The former backed out with amiable evasions. His colleague informed us that the thing was already settled. I don't think that I can swallow this, and I travel to Berlin to-morrow evening. I don't know

what the instructions are, unfortunately, but shall apply for them to the Chancellor, and then act accordingly. I believe this is the end of the matter as far as I am concerned. I have one more audience, fixed for to-morrow, at Libau. I could hardly refuse the interview without at the same time handing in my resignation. So for this reason I shall go once more to Pless. Müller is trying to effect a compromise.

[With the final departure from Main Headquarters, this war correspondence ends.]

II

SOME REMARKS ON OUR SHIPBUILDING POLICY

I

THE professional foundation for the campaign of calumny publicly carried on against the Imperial navy must have been constituted by a few journalists who, having formerly served in it, felt themselves relieved of the necessity of admitting that they had never had anything to do professionally with either a modern battleship or a submarine.

The enlightened opinion of naval officers, capable of judging, remained in the background, because the navy was not in the habit of entering into newspaper controversies.

Besides the public calumnies, rumours in themselves much more dangerous went the round of "initiated" political circles. To the measures adopted systematically, at any rate for the most part by interested parties, to ruin my position in the eyes of the nation, the navy, and the Kaiser, belong the rumours which were spread about the inadequate construction of ships and weapons. It was given out through every possible channel that our ships were badly constructed, particularly that they were under-armed and not adapted for

long-range firing. The battle of Jutland has in part afforded a proof to the contrary, and prompted Admiral Scheer to inform the Kaiser that the excellence of the *matériel* contributed largely to the success of the battle. The Kaiser felt himself bound, in view of the feeling in the officers' corps, to express in a telegram from Wilhelmshaven, even after my dismissal, his recognition of this service to the navy. As feeling is still being roused by charges of this kind, and as there are interested parties who still seek to shift the historical responsibility for the inadequate use of the sea-power actually at our disposal from themselves on to the mistakes supposed to have been made during my period of office, I propose to deal with some of the charges which have come to my ears.

To begin with, it is an idiosyncrasy of our people to estimate foreign products higher than their own. From this idiosyncrasy our navy also has not been free, especially in regard to the English navy. One was disposed to accept the boasting assertions of English firms at their own valuation, and to consider new technical improvements to have been actually carried out, even in the case of older ships. Also when we were able to bring English *matériel* into comparison with our own and practically to prove the contrary, it was frequently difficult in this respect to convince the fleet, once a preconceived opinion had been formed, or an external superiority, for instance, in calibre established. For example, we could produce indisputable scientific and technical proof that our rifles, guns, and

armour were superior to the English. This was often passed over with the catch-phrase that these were only "range results," without reflecting that this is the only method by which indisputable comparisons were possible. In a memorandum of Admiral Ingenohl's there occurs the characteristic statement that it was not till after his experience in the war that he could convince himself of the extraordinary effectiveness of our armour-piercing shells and their superiority to the corresponding English shells. To the manufacture of these armour-piercing shells we had devoted particular care and labour.

Apart from the peculiarity of this mode of reasoning which is so widespread among us, we must also remember that to arrive at a correct judgment of the standard of sea-power achieved it is necessary to regard the finished achievements as a whole and not seize on individual flaws. Flaws, of course, were bound to exist in our equipment, for the creation of a sea-power needed the labour of a whole generation, and this amount of time fate did not allow us.

Further, we have to consider that our navy, compared with the great foreign navies, has always found itself in financial straits, which in view of the Chancellor's attitude towards the fleet had a most hampering effect on its development, especially during the last five years before the war. On the voting of the estimates during this time we were every year emphatically informed by the Chancellor, through the medium of the Secretary of the Treasury, that we were only to

count on small amounts; and therefore in order to arrive at sums which could be negotiated with the Treasury, all the demands of the various branches of the navy for the preliminary estimates were cut down as low as possible. The Admiralty then approached the Treasury with the minimum demands. But instead of rewarding our restraint, the Treasury forced us every time to accept further considerable reductions on these estimates which we had put forward as a minimum. In the years immediately before the war the negotiations with the Treasury dealt with sums that were of no real financial importance to the Empire. Ten per cent. of the military estimates of 1913 would have been sufficient to meet the acute requirements of the navy. I may mention as examples a certain acceleration in the building of ships already laid down, the supply of oil fuel, the improvement of the fire-control, quicker adoption of technical improvements, and so on. In view of the shortage of money with which the Admiralty had to reckon, and the fear, encouraged by the Treasury and Reichstag, of exceeding the estimates, it will be readily understood with what caution the available money was distributed, and how we were constantly forced to weigh in the balance the cost of remedying even the smallest defect, which in consequence remained a defect. The different departments of the navy which could not ignore the constitutional necessity for the further development of the Navy, always shifted the blame on to the Secretary of State of the Admiralty if their demands were

not granted, under the impression that their special demand was the essential one, and that the Secretary of State ought to have stood out for it. Among the Great Powers our estimates for building took until 1905 the fifth place, in 1906 (after the Russian fleet fell out) fourth; in 1907 (when France fell behind) third; in 1913 (after the new increase in the Russian fleet) again in the fourth. So little have we contributed to the rival "piling up" of armaments! Even though, through thrift and industry, we created the second strongest fleet, there were still many wishes unfulfilled.

I now come in detail to the reproaches with regard to our *matériel.*

In view of the international rivalry in the building of big ships, I did not think, both on political and financial grounds, that I was in a position to set the pace. In the great changes, for example the transition to the building of dreadnoughts, and in the increase from time to time of calibre, we were generally quite a year behind the English. In spite of that I am convinced that, taking the technical periods as a whole, our new *matériel* surpassed theirs.

In these important changes other determining factors have to be considered. Thus in 1906 there was only one firm in Germany, and that moreover with an English patent, which could build large turbine engines. We were obliged therefore to limit ourselves at first to supplying these to the first-class cruisers, and keep to the piston engine for the ships of the line laid

down in 1906. The retention of these engines goes side by side with the turret disposition of the heavy guns which has been condemned by so many critics. On the other hand, this arrangement makes firing from both sides possible, and has certain tactical advantages in case the line is outflanked in consequence of numerical superiority on the enemy's side, in striking against the enemy's line and in the *mêlée*. In building the various squadrons we were obliged, having regard to our system of defence, to give attention to the homogeneity of the individual ships in order to facilitate the interchange of crews and the supply and exchange of reserves. This brings with it the tactical advantages that such homogeneity ensures.

As far as the heavy guns are concerned, with the exception of the latest ships, ours were behind the English in calibre. But that was counterbalanced by other advantages, for the piercing power of our heavy guns remained fully equal to the piercing power of the guns of English ships of the same class, and this was of the first importance. Our projectiles were designed to take effect afterwards in the interior of the enemy ships. When we heard that the English were increasing the power of their guns and it was assumed that in all probability they would increase the strength of their armour, inferior to ours hitherto, we resolved in 1912-13 to pass over the intermediate stages and at once adopt a calibre that would ensure for the squadron laid down in 1913 in any case a superiority in this respect, and we chose the 38-centi-

metre gun. As a matter of fact the English adopted this calibre at the same time as ourselves.

The following table, based on official data, shows the considerable inferiority of the English first-class battleships in artillery-piercing power. And it should be noticed too, in this connection, that the advantages on the German side, such as size of steel plates, quality of armour and shells, are not considered.

Whole volumes might be written to indicate in detail how we have made full use of the vast superiority of our Krupp guns over the heavy English wire-bound type. To laymen who are interested in the question I should like to convey some idea how important was this saving of weight by the adoption of a slightly smaller calibre, for every increase immediately affected the construction of the turrets with their heavy armour and simply ate up weight. This would have been a mistake if—as was actually the case—it was not necessary and of direct use for the armour-piercing power of our guns, for the weight saved could be used for other purposes. In the chapter on shipbuilding I have already discussed the measures taken to prevent our ships sinking; this was the purpose to which the weight saved was transferred. I will here only touch on a few of the advantages we possessed over the British fleet, and which, among other things, made the reasonable limitation of our heavy calibre possible. We used up about 100 tons for our metal cartridge boxes, as compared with the oil-silk used by the English; the conse-

quence was that when the magazines took fire the English ships, like the battle-cruisers *Queen Mary, Indefatigable,* and *Invincible* were blown to pieces, while on the *Seydlitz,* when the magazine caught fire, there was no explosion, though of course the magazine was gutted and there was loss of life. As the result of experiments with targets we disposed of several hundred tons in strengthening the hull below the water-line to get better protection against torpedoes. Our fore-turret alone weighed 400 tons; it had the unusual armour thickness of 400 mm., and was so broad that on both sides one could look straight astern clear of the funnels, which was of great advantage for the control of the ship in action. The turrets surrounding the central fire-control communicated directly with the lower parts of the ship by means of shafts, and particularly with the central control of the ship, which was amidships below the water-line and ended in a gangway which contained the electric connections in an absolutely protected position. Our arrangements for night-fighting were highly developed. In the night following the battle of Jutland the English precautions were miserable compared with ours, as an officer I know told me. All our ships were armed with guns of middle calibre, armour-protected, sheltered by parapets which the English had not. Our battleships also had six or seven torpedo tubes below the water-line. Had the action been fought to a finish, this in itself might have been the decisive factor. I could give many more examples.

This is a province which can only be dealt with by means of special apparatus and with the assistance of a large staff of specialists.

The examples I have given, however, are sufficient for the purpose. They demonstrate well enough how much understanding of such a province is brought to bear by the mercenary writers on the navy, who at the present time are advancing their own interests by throwing mud, and have their information for the most part from discontented subordinate officers.

Now with regard to the reproach that our light cruisers were too lightly armed, it must be borne in mind that of this class of ship we could only lay down two yearly. Originally the estimates allowed for three cruisers, but the third cruiser was cut off by the Reichstag, while England, on the other hand, in accordance with her trans-Atlantic requirements, had laid down yearly three or four times that number. This enabled the English continually to oppose light cruisers of the most modern type to our cruisers, among which older types had to be used. Further, our light cruisers had to serve for foreign service as well as in home waters. For this reason we set special value on speed. Those English light cruisers that were armed with 15-centimetre guns were inferior in speed to ours of the same class. The *Karlsruhe* turned this to excellent account. As her object was not to fight, she evaded her opponents with little trouble. She was in her time the fastest ship in the Atlantic. In the

case of the fight and loss of the *Emden* it must be remembered that the English ship was four years younger and nearly 2,000 tons bigger than the *Emden;* thus no comparison can be drawn. In her last fight the *Emden* was at a still further disadvantage, as a considerable portion of her gun-crews, commanded by her first lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander von Mücke, and two other officers had been told off to destroy a wireless station on shore, so were not present in the fight.

So long as the range of the torpedo was small, that is to say till about 1910-11, and when in order to get within range the torpedo boats had to come up very close to their target, the 10-centimetre gun not only sufficed for the light cruiser against enemy torpedo boats, but was superior to a gun of 15 centimetres, in that it allowed for a greater number being carried and possessed a greater rapidity of fire than the larger calibre. As regards action against enemy light cruisers it continued to be quite sufficient in all cases up to the time when these began to be armoured. Larger calibre had indeed seemed desirable before this for the use of the light cruisers on foreign service. The interests of the war at home, which as far as we were concerned was of the first importance, were quite the opposite of those abroad. Therefore, as early as 1910, I had sent in preliminary designs for small cruisers with heavier arms. In 1911 I summoned the Commander-in-Chief's staff to an interview on this question, and allowed them extra munitions in order

that they might study the calibre question by means of practical tests. The result was that both the fleet-staff under Admiral von Holtzendorff and the commanding officer of the experimenting ships pronounced in favour of the retention of the 10-centimetre gun as a standard calibre for the light cruisers. The commanding officer of the experimenting ships emphasized at the same time the possible increase in the number of guns while retaining the limited dimensions of the cruisers, which for their work as torpedo-boat destroyers was to their advantage.

As a matter of fact the English went back for similar reasons from their light cruisers, armed only with 15-cm. guns, to ships like the *Arethusa* class, with a main armament of 10-cm. guns, and a 15-centimetre at bow and stern. All the experts and commanding officers had pronounced against the two-calibre armament which I had asked them to consider. Yet in spite of this, and the financial and other difficulties involved, I resolved at the beginning of 1912 on my own initiative to institute a change in the calibre of our light cruisers; and as we learned just then that the bigger classes of English light cruisers had been armoured at the water-line, we were, according to my opinion, bound to pass on at once to a 15-cm. gun, as a minimum calibre for the light cruisers, as not sufficient armour-piercing power could be obtained with less calibre.

At the special audience at the beginning of May, 1912, at which this subject was to be discussed, the

Emperor did not agree with the view of the naval staff as to this change. He said that the ships would be too big, and that a gun like the 13-cm. sufficed for the army. I might, however, study the question further if I liked. But as a change in the calibre had become necessary, and from inquiries I ascertained that the 13-cm. army gun was not sufficient, I gave the contract in May, 1912, for the construction of a light cruiser with a 15-cm. gun. At the end of September, 1912, His Majesty approved the design which had meanwhile been prepared for the light cruiser type with 15-cm. gun of the year 1913. One of these cruisers, the *Wiesbaden,* came to a glorious end in the battle of Jutland.

It has been complained with regard to our torpedo boats that they had not sufficient fuel capacity. We had in this case to contend with the difficulty that our coal did not give the same heat as that used by the English torpedo boats; and even if we had procured a small supply of English coal for our torpedo boats, it was impossible during a long war to maintain a sufficient supply of English coal. Also in relation to the use of oil fuel we were severely handicapped by the difficulty of getting supplies compared with England, who enjoyed absolute freedom in this respect. As we didn't possess any oil wells near enough, we were compelled to maintain a supply for war. This was, however, next to impossible in the case of the big ships. The expenditure of hundreds of millions would have been required, but even with the torpedo

boats we had to exercise economy. In the year 1912 we were, however, obliged to adopt oil as the sole fuel in the torpedo boats because we could no longer cope with the heavy claims on transport which coal demanded. We did this with the full consciousness that with the abolition of the coal bunker we were giving up a considerable part of the safety of the torpedo boats against sinking and fire. The English had once adopted the exclusive use of oil, but in recent years had come back to coal as a fuel, because oil was too expensive. It is to be gathered from this that the English, who were in a quite different position from ourselves, vacillated on the question till just before the war.

Another method of increasing the range of the torpedo boats was to increase the displacement, but the fleet (fleet and torpedo inspection) urged still in the years 1909 and 1910 a reduction in the size of the boat, because they believed that the bigger boats were too difficult to handle in action, especially if the line were broken. After urgent pressure had been brought to bear, in the year 1910 I yielded to the proposal of the inspector of the torpedo arm to allow a series of torpedo boats with less displacement and proportionately less coal capacity to be built, after the inspectors responsible for the construction and erection of the torpedo boats gave the assurance that there was to be no diminution in the range of these boats, which were to be fed by an increased oil supply. The assent of the inspectors to this not being obtained, we returned

again to the larger type boats in the year 1912. Any essential increase in the range could only be reached for the torpedo boats with a corresponding increase of the displacement. At our naval manœuvres in the Baltic and North Sea the need for such an increase of range was not apparent. It was not till the hanging back of the English fleet during the war, and the consequent possibility of our making an attack on the English coast, that the necessity for an increased range came strongly into evidence. After the outbreak of war we had taken over a number of boats built in Germany for the Argentine Republic. These boats were intended for the Atlantic, and were much bigger than the boats of our type. They had a displacement of about 1,500 to 2,000 tons. One can see, quite apart from the financial question, that this places the torpedo-boat arm on a quite different basis. At the cost of a certain diminution in numbers, *torpedo ships* are obtained, which of course require increased armament. In the battle of Jutland these big boats, formerly destined for Argentina, took part as well as boats of our own type. As I have been informed, in the fighting by day, boats of our type proved the more efficient. Questions of type and tactical disposition entered on a new phase in 1912. In view of the interpretation of the Naval Law we had hitherto limited ourselves to a single type of cruiser, which had to be used both on foreign service and in home waters. We were obliged on this account, because of the few ships we had of this kind at our disposal, to change about and make

one serve both purposes. When we then, as explained above, adopted a considerable enlargement of the small cruisers, these lost in the process much of their original character as destroyers. For this object they were too big and too costly, and speed could no longer be taken as the fundamental condition of their construction. To build two different types we should have to build more than two ships a year, which involved an alteration of the law. This was not practicable in 1912 and 1914, not only owing to political conditions, but to the limited financial conditions forced upon us. The road, then, which we thought of pursuing was in a certain degree a return to the principle which we acted on in the first fourteen years of the existence of this arm when we built only small torpedo boats, and that was to give every torpedo-boat flotilla a large convoy.

Seeing that torpedo boats and their organization—because they don't rest on a traditional type—are not clearly defined in the naval law, we could have followed the course without more ado, as soon as money for the navy came in more readily. A slight but by no means decisive defect in our power for defence has arisen here, which, however, by the perfecting of naval law could have remedied itself all the more easily as the usefulness of our extended foreign service made itself more widely felt. The question touched on here was before the war not yet ripe as a whole, and required tactical tests near home before we could deal with its solution on a wider scale.

II

Now I pass on to deal with reproaches from the progressives, to the effect that under my management the Admiralty administration had not sufficiently insisted on the development of the submarine nor recognized its importance, and I shall only deal with these reproaches in so far as they have not already received an official contradiction supported by all parties at a committee of the Reichstag in the spring of 1917.

On the outbreak of war, we were, as far as the submarine weapon goes, at the head of all the navies of the world.

In what concerned the technical development of the submarine type and the number of highly developed submarines the success was achieved because we used our experience in the development of the torpedo weapon and systematically applied it to the submarine, and because from the beginning we set its future employment for long-distane work before us as our aim. Submarines that are only capable of serving in the defence of harbours of a limited coast-line have hitherto had for Germany, in view of the situation of her coast-line, no real importance.

Apart from a long series of minor problems of engineering, it was first and foremost the motor on which the development of the submarine depended for long-distance employment. The stronger and better the motor the nearer we approached to our aim. So

we threw ourselves heart and soul into its development on the conclusion of the trial tests of M1. In order to acquire a suitable petrol motor, a competition of the most distinguished and competent motor firms was held early in 1908 to build an 850 horse-power motor. Contracts were entered into for this object with Augsburg Motor Co., Ltd., Nuremburg Motor Co., Ltd., the Germania Works at Kiel and Körting of Hanover, Fiat of Turin. We had previously achieved considerable results with the Körting motor in M1, and it was presumed that even stronger machines of this kind would be possible. But to supply submarines at that time in large quantities to any great extent would have been a mistake, for there were a number of other details of this arm not yet perfected and requiring development before they would answer our purpose. Also we did not know what effect any considerable increase in the size of the boat would have on its diving capacity. The most important reason, however, why even the Körting motor did not enable us to build a satisfactory submarine for long-distance work in war was that the visibility of the boat from smoke formation by day and fire reflection by night was too great.

In spite of this we did not stop our efforts to carry on the development of the other details of submarine construction, and in the next few years seventeen submarines altogether were equipped with petroleum motors. The folly of the reproach from the Democratic side that in these years we had neglected to provide

submarines in large numbers and so lost a great chance in the world-war, is best demonstrated, without going into any enumeration of the other impossibilities, by the melancholy fact that in war our petroleum boats were the first to fall victims to the enemy and that the two last boats of this kind that were left we withdrew from action. Had we followed that path of development, we should never have conducted a submarine war with any prospect of success. Instead of that we did everything we could to develop other motors side by side with the petroleum motor, among which the Diesel motor offered the most prospect of success. We succeeded in building with this an entirely satisfactory submarine engine, with which, since U19 was built in 1911, all our submarines were equipped. But such new developments had to go through a stage of so-called infantile disease which was not finally outgrown until 1913, at a time when we had a great number of boats with Diesel engines, partly completed and partly under construction.

When war broke out we were at once in a position to get a type of boat perfectly adapted for war purposes, and equipped for long-distance service, in the so-called MS boat, which could be ordered by telegram ready for mobilization.

In July, 1914, twenty-eight boats were ready, and seventeen in course of building, altogether forty-five boats. The great submarine base in Wilhelmstrasse, as well as the branch base in Heligoland, the construction of which had taken ten years, was nearly com-

pleted, but at the beginning of the war was not quite ready for use.

From the point of view of *matériel* and engineering, and in view of the stage reached in the development of the submarine for long-distance work, and the time required for construction of quays and harbours, we could not build many more until the summer of 1914. The number of the boats finished would have been considerably greater (we might have had forty-one instead of twenty-eight) if the manufacturers engaged had been in a position to carry out their contracts. The boats U31 and U41 ordered by me in the year 1912, which were to form the chief reinforcement of the submarine flotilla authorized by the submarine estimates of 1912, ought to have been delivered between October 1st, 1913, and August 1st, 1914. But as the Germania Yard found it could not make the two-stroke motor built by it satisfactory, these eleven boats were retarded by nearly a year and a half. Not only were the boats themselves not forthcoming, but the crews for these boats were not trained; so the experience that might have been gained since October 1st, 1913, was missed, and besides this these boats were blocking the Germania Dockyard, which in consequence could not deal with the new orders issued on mobilization.

At the Dantzig Yard the delay in building U29 and U30 was less as both boats were commissioned in the autumn of 1914.

This failure of the most modern submarine class, U31 to U41, is of the greatest importance. The fault

lay in the fact that the two firms concerned were unable to carry out what they had anticipated. Submarine production was still in its infancy. Herein lies another reason why we could not have produced more boats in peace-time than was actually the case.

The question as to how far our submarines were capable of rendering material assistance in the war had not yet been settled in July, 1914. Before 1912 opinions were divided as to whether the men would be able to hold out for longer than three days. The settling of the question was taken in hand with energy, though on the men's account with a certain amount of caution made necessary by the state of peace. A few single boats were first told off for trial voyages of endurance. In the winter of 1912-13 the whole flotilla was sent to the North Sea. They were to go out a distance of 300 miles (Heligoland—England) and then maintain their station ready for action as long as possible. They stayed out eleven days. As a result of these experiments a number of improvements were introduced which made it possible to prolong this time considerably.

The fittings necessary were at once ordered, and the success of these was proved in the war. War experience, too, naturally led to a further improvement of the boats. But all the improvements and adaptations cannot alter the fact that our first-class submarines sent on long distances consisted entirely of the type that was in use before the war. Not till the year 1918 were larger boats of a new type added. When in

August and September, 1919, the possibility of using boats of a lesser radius of action, against England from Flanders, became more likely, small and, later on, intermediate submarines were designed and were ordered in great numbers. Small Barkas motor engines were sufficient for propelling the first of these and they were procurable from several firms. In March, 1916, altogether 147 boats were under construction, and were to be delivered in the same year as they were estimated for.

That was the utmost limit of achievement of which our manufacturers at that time were capable. For more recent times I lack the necessary official report.

The following is a comparison between the development of the submarine in England and the point it had reached on the outbreak of war:

In 1906 England built only small submarines with petrol engine drive, as harbour and coast-line defences, and only one of which—B11—put in an appearance during the war. This boat was towed without a crew to Tenedos, near the Dardanelles, and worked close to its base. In 1906 experiments were begun with boats of a wider radius of action. The boat of the English C class was designed and a large number of these were built. But they were not then available for long-distance use. Not till the boat of the Budget year 1910 could motors of 800 horsepower be obtained for long-distance use. The motor was constructed after the Diesel pattern. These were the E class. Of this class in July, 1914, the seventh

boat was commissioned, and these English E boats are the only ones that can really be compared with ours. There was no separate accommodation for the men in these, and this was also absent from at least the first fifty built during the war. Their sojourn in German waters was at the end of 1914 limited to four days, later to six days; from which one can judge of their capacity for long-distance service. Some of them went to Russia; they were escorted as far as Kattegat, where they had their tanks refilled. As we heard later in Helsingfors, where they were sunk before the town was taken by our troops in 1918, their motors were very unreliable—"burst as often as the Russians'."

When war broke out there were thus seven English submarines as against ten German boats, perfectly completed for long-distance service. How thoroughly developed and fit for active service our type of boat was is shown by the fact that these boats throughout the war responded to all that was required of them, and until shortly before the end could be employed with the greatest success. This claim cannot be made for any other weapon in the army or navy constructed before the war. The number of our boats would have been double if the promised deliveries from the building firms had been executed. If one includes the submarines built in England from 1906 to 1909, and sets them against our bigger and more highly developed petrol boats built in the same period, England shows $7 + 10 = 17$ boats against Germany's $10 + 15 = 25$ boats. The most important point is that we had

tested and perfected an efficient submarine for long-distance service in war and could simply go on building it without any further experiments being necessary.

Even more unfavourably does France come out of a comparison with our position. For this there lies before us ample irrefutable evidence in the report of a committee of the French Chamber of July, 1915, and March, 1916. According to it the Augsburg firm delivered the first serviceable, of course small, Diesel motor-engines to France in 1907. When France wanted to adopt in 1910 a bigger radius of action, so many difficulties were encountered in the construction of the bigger engines necessary that in face of such failures it was decided to go back to steam engines in spite of their disadvantages. The opinion seemed to prevail that it was better to possess an imperfect submarine driven by steam than none at all. These boats were not ready in 1915, when their building was stopped in order to return again to Diesel motors. According to the Minister of the Marine, apart from the inferior diving capacity of the steam submarines their great visibility and the risk of suffocation for the crew were too great. In the year 1916 the French had still not succeeded in producing an unimpeachable Diesel motor. Creusot, the most important French motor firm, had forty times running failed with one of these bigger motors.

From this it is clear that France at the outbreak of war had no submarine adapted for long-distance service purposes.

After such a comparison it is not to be wondered at that the English, as a result of their own experience and that of the French, believed it to be impossible for our submarines to penetrate into the Irish Sea, and that they supposed we had hidden escort ships and secret bases on their coasts. My administrator in Sardinia was interned because he was under suspicion of maintaining such a base. America, even when she declared war against us, had no submarines at all adaptable for long-distance service.

The above statements prove that at the outbreak of war we not only stood at the head of all the nations of the world in the quality and number of our submarines, but we could do more deadly damage with them than all our opponents put together. Compare with this fact the systematically circulated lie that the submarine weapon had been neglected.

While testing the use of our submarines for war it became increasingly evident that the development of the navy as a whole cannot be directed by one man. The Secretary of State exercised no authority over the executive command. Even the technical experiments had to be submitted for their approval. It is natural that the executive command were opposed to all experiments for the development of submarines. The Commander-in-Chief of the fleet, as a certain number of submarines were already available, wanted them to co-operate with the fleet in manœuvres; he regarded the submarines chiefly as auxiliaries to the high-seas fleet and employed them as protective cordons, or as

scouts. Exercises useful for long-distance work, on the other hand fell into the background, though in individual cases they were tried and also worked out theoretically.

The war, the fine achievements of Weddegen, Hersing, and others, soon, however, fixed the real importance of this new weapon, and so it came about that by September, 1914, the idea of employing the submarines against hostile merchant shipping was taken seriously into consideration. If this kind of long-distance service for the submarines had not taken an important part in our deliberations before the war, but only the employment of the submarines against enemy fighting forces, it must be borne in mind that up to 1914 we had no means of gauging correctly the possible extent of this long-distance activity; above all the violation by England of the Declaration of London and the Paris Convention of 1856, though certainly not considered out of the question, was not expected to the degree which it actually reached later.

With the object of enlightening the lay mind on this point, which has been intentionally obscured, I will try to summarize the salient points in a few brief sentences.

I. Submarines which can only be employed at short distances from their base, *i.e.* only in the neighbourhood of the coast, had for Germany neither political nor military value. Therefore we skipped over this phase at once, to concentrate on the development of high-sea boats.

II. The significance of the high-sea submarine was fully recognized by us, and its development as energetically and quickly pursued as was consistent with efficient equipment and the safety of the *personnel.*

III. So soon as the high-sea submarine was practicable for war purposes we procured in peace-time as many as our manufacturers could deliver, a fact which my successor early in 1917 emphatically impressed upon the Reichstag Committee.

IV. On the outbreak of war we stood with our submarines first of all the nations, both from the point of view of quality as well as quantity of our otherwise limited fleet.

V. Their use in war and the endurance of the crew could only be practically tested when the high-sea submarines were actually available.

VI. As this was only the case shortly before the war, one could, when the war began, hardly foresee what their radius of service would be.

VII. Our enemies were completely surprised at the performances of our submarines. This surprise might have had a decisive effect on the war. It put into our hands a certain but, at the time, limited chance of success.

VIII. The command of the high-sea fleet attached great value, both in peace and at the beginning of the war, to the employment of the submarines to support the fleet in battle, especially as advance lines having a similar effect to minefields.

IX. The Admiralty on the other hand opposed long-

distance service from the beginning, as it involved employment against hostile battleships and merchantmen.

X. It is of course an understood thing that with regard to the last we entertained the intention attributed to us by Percy Scott, in the form of a romance by Conan Doyle, of trying to annihilate England with our submarines.

XI. Such intentions, however, would have had no object unless the submarines had proved their full capacity both in *personnel* and *matériel* on the high seas.

XII. This could, in consideration of the actual state of development of the submarine, only have been reached during the war because the improvement in the endurance of the crews to a great extent had only been effected immediately before the war.

XIII. When during the course of the war we obtained, comparatively speaking soon, a satisfactory verdict on this point, there came into the foreground the weighty question of international and military law relating to the conduct of the war on commerce at sea.

XIV. This question had not been sufficiently matured when, against my vote, but with the Chancellor's approval, the Government issued the decree of February 4th, 1915.

XV. In the navy we had arrived at the conviction that if the submarine commercial war were to have any lasting effect, the U-boats must be allowed to

torpedo without warning. This principle by no means excluded concessions to neutrals.

XVI. In the existing maritime law which we hitherto had strictly observed there were no precedents for submarine war on commerce.

XVII. When England unscrupulously outraged all the fundamental principles of the old maritime law by declaring a blockade in defence of its definitions, and by sowing the open North Sea with mines, and when America accepted this proceeding practically as maritime law "adapted to the conditions of modern warfare and commerce," then without doubt we acquired the formal right to adopt a policy of *quid pro quo*. This the submarines enabled us to do.

XVIII. We did not possess the formal right alone, but also the right of self-preservation of a nation starving and fighting for its very existence gave to us a natural right.

XIX. The legal as well as the natural right, after the Government's declaration had once been issued, had to be maintained with the most emphatic determination by the leaders of our empire in the face of the whole world.

XX. From a military point of view the submarine war on commerce grew in importance so soon as the deciding factor was no longer, and moreover could not be, naval war. For, directly the submarine war became the chief weapon, the fleet, self-defeated, was bound by its presence to make and hold a free passage for the return of the submarines from our waters.

Here I am going to give, with his permission, the views of our leading submarine expert, who at the beginning of its use in war was captain of U1, and trained the submarine captains, personally took over and tested numerous boats, and as commanding officer of the submarines in Flanders, received the *Ordre pour le Merité*. I quote from a letter of his written in the spring of 1918, to which I have had access. Commander Bartenbach is one of the few naval officers who, through his exertions in time of peace, is in a position thoroughly to review our submarine development, and at the same time has had the greatest experience during the submarine war.

" Commander Bartenbach to Admiral z. D. Dick.

" BRUGES,
" April 10th, 1918.

" YOUR EXCELLENCY,

" Your kind letter of April 6th I will answer as fully as I can without reference to the documents.

"(1*a*). *Development of the submarine before the war.*—At first we aimed at only a high-seas submarine for attack. It would have been easy for a Secretary of State, not obsessed with the necessity for high-sea qualifications in the submarines, to pacify his own conscience and that of the people's representatives by the building of a number of small boats at a cheap rate.

" In view of the hight cost of carrying out the naval programme due to the ever-increasing cost of battleships, armoured cruisers, and torpedo boats (oil fuel), the Grand Admiral—who, God knows, had to contend

with parsimony on all sides—was strongly tempted to economize in other directions. This he did not do in the case of the submarines, but broad-mindedly set his country's safety above money considerations, and so laid a sound foundation on which to build. For instance, U21, which was in operation as one of an accepted class to go to the Dardanelles and save Turkey, and perhaps to exercise a decisive influence on the course of the war, was commissioned in the year 1913, after taking more than two years to build. So even by the end of 1910 the recognition of the submarine's value in war was taking practical form. Such boats, however, cost three times as much money and far more labour and time than a small surface-boat. One could have built three times as many boats of restricted range, such as the earlier English, French, Russian, Austrian, Italian, and other boats. But we had progressed by leaps and bounds, and in 1914 our type of U-boat took the lead. Everyone must admit that a type so perfect as U21, which fulfilled all demands made upon it and stood tests designed not by a politician nor a civilian, but by the Grand Admiral himself, is a proof that the value of this weapon was justly estimated. When in the beginning of February I interviewed the Secretary of State his first question was:

"'How long could one of our submarines hold out off the Thames?'

"This question could at that time only have been asked by a naval officer who clearly foresaw the way in which the submarine would be used. An explanation of the purpose of the submarine forms the first sentence in the memorandum on the use of submarines which has been worked out at the *Admiralty,* not by the Naval Staff.

"'The aim to be kept in view in submarine construction is their use off the enemy's coast.'

"This was the aim of the tests carried out in 1912 and 1913 to determine how long a submarine could remain at sea.

"In the spring of 1912 two boats were sent to the Baltic, and in the winter of 1912 the whole flotilla to the North Sea with orders to hold their stations in readiness for action as long as possible after a cruise of 300 miles (Heligoland—England). On that occasion they remained at sea eleven days. These facts also refute the legend which is continually cropping up that before the war a submarine could hardly be relied on to remain at sea twenty-four hours. Even in 1909 submarines sailed with the fleet in manœuvres for days.

"We had all good reason to keep these tests and experiences secret before the war. The tests were ordered by the Grand Admiral under the heading of 'technical experiments' because the fleet and the Naval Staff did not know how far we had got. In my opinion these facts are convincing proof that the Grand Admiral recognized the value of the submarine in war as few others did.

"(*b*) The first condition for the manufacture of such submarines as should really correspond to the requirements of war was the construction of a serviceable, fast running (because of the accumulators), not very heavy engine of at least 850 horse-power. The production of such an engine would be a masterpiece of engineering, and competition was aroused by the order for a sample 850 horse-power engine placed with the best firms—the Augsburg engine works, the Germania shipbuilding yard, Fiat of Turin, and the Reutzer gas-engine works. The petrol engines of the Körting

and Daimler firms had not proved sufficiently capable of development. The reproach that preference was given to Körting is explained by the fact that on U2 Daimler engines were fitted but did not prove satisfactory, so that for petrol engines only Körting was left.

"Of these experimental engines, only the Augsburger engine-works could turn out the four-stroke, and the Germania shipbuilding yard the two-stroke engines, within anything like the time allowed. All the other firms, in spite of enormous labour and expense, failed to do so by the beginning of the war. These two types of engine were now adopted, the Augsburg four-stroke for the boats in the Imperial Dantzig dockyard, and for those in the Germania Yard the two-stroke.

"The whole available motor industries of Germany and some abroad, such as the Fiat, Turin, thus strained every nerve in the competition to obtain an efficient engine. The German navy was the first to possess an 850 horse-power oil engine for submarines. Unfortunately the two-stroke motor of the Germania Yard after several trials was not free from objection which, as is shown below, was to be the cause of serious trouble.

"(*c*) As regards the number of boats put in hand, after the type was fixed, there was the money question to be considered, and besides that the fact that a sudden leap forward in development should be avoided; for the private firms were only willing to adapt themselves to the building of the submarines if there was an assured prospect later of continuous business in this department.

"(*d*) The naval estimates (submarine estimates of 1912) raised the sums hitherto standing at disposal for this end. Immediately boats were ordered in large

numbers. In 1912 contracts were given for U27–30 (Imperial Yard, Dantzig), U31–41 (Germania Yard), U42 at Fiat, San Giorgio; in all 16 submarines, an unprecedented number at that time. Besides this an estimate was given for the building of another at the Weser Yard (a steam boat), making a seventeenth submarine. I think that this is striking proof that after the submarine estimates had been passed, everything was done to make the best use of the means to hand for the building of submarines. In this year too an endeavour was made to put the submarine construction on a wider basis. The following firms were approached: the Weser shipbuilding yard established a department for submarine designing; Schichau declined unconditionally; Vulcan, Hamburg, declined to establish a department for designing, would only undertake to carry out finished designs already prepared so long as further contracts were assured; Fiat, San Giorgio, received a contract, U42.

"I add here for Your Excellency's benefit that the Estimates Committee chose to regard this energetic placing of contracts, and the consequent ear-marking of grant for a period of three years, as an encroachment on the Budget rights of the Reichstag.

"(*e*) The reasons why at the beginning of the war there were not more submarines with the fleet lies in the failure of the builders, who were not in a position to deliver the boats contracted for by the Grand Admiral within the time specified. When the war began we had in commission (U1 and U2 were retained for training purposes) U3 to U18, U19 to U27 = 25 boats.

"We should have had, if the firms in question had fulfilled their promises, U3 to U41 = 39 boats.

"The struggles with the builders to avoid delays,

the sharp attacks of the Secretary of State in person on the Germania Yard, the action taken against the inspector, are fresh in Your Excellency's memory. The loss of over a year of training and experience caused by over a year's delay in the delivery of U23 to U26, U31, etc., and the lack of fully trained commanders and crews naturally weighed almost as heavily in the scale as the lack of material and equipment. We should have occupied quite a different position on August 1st, 1914, if the builders, who talked so big, had fulfilled the promises they had made to the Grand Admiral based on their own calculations.

"The main ground of excuse for the grossest offender—the Germania Yard, which failed in the delivery of the eleven submarines U31 to U41—lay in the fact that the two-stroke engine, which was accepted on the strength of a test in August, 1911, and which could never again be made satisfactory, so that we were compelled, in order to avoid delay with these boats, to substitute Augsburg engines at the expense of the Germania Yard.[1]

"In these circumstances the Admiral of the Fleet was powerless to alter anything when a further half-dozen submarines were ordered in the year 1912; and these too had to wait for engines. Your Excellency is acquainted with the fact that the responsible shipbuilding official was relieved of his post. In the speech by Struve this gentleman is mentioned as a valuable asset that had not been sufficiently made use of.

"(2*a*). About the submarines in war-time I can only speak from personal experience of the beginning

[1] The two-stroke motors were at last, after nearly a year and a half's delay, made efficient in December, 1914. The substitutes ordered in Augsburg have been used in other boats.—Editor's note.

of the war, as afterwards through my duties here I was, so to speak, not so much in the picture.

"At the mobilization orders were placed as had been arranged for the MS boats, and at once put in hand in the Weser Yard, because the Germania was heavily burdened with the retarded U31 to U41, and from Austrian submarines besides. It speaks for itself, that these arrears standing over from peace-times hindered the building of new boats.

"Above everything it was a question now of pressing on the boats under construction; that this was done with energy by the submarine inspection staff is proved by the peremptory letter addressed by the Admiralty to the General Director of Krupp's in Essen against which Krupp protested.

"At that time the question of labour had already been taken in hand, and workmen procured from the Imperial dockyard and Fleusburg.

"In view of the time they took to build (eighteen months for the first boat) it did not seem possible that the latest submarines would be ready for use in this war as all Germany thought of it in those days. I will bear the brunt of this reproach myself.

"But, as soon as the Flemish coast was occupied, the Grand Admiral resolved to build small submarines which could be ready early in 1915, so as to make the fullest use of the Flemish harbours. The submarine experts even advised against the building of such small boats. The Secretary of State, however, ordered the building of thirty-two small boats, and he proved to be right, for these boats have rendered excellent service, and are still being used with success, though unfortunately for other reasons they could not all be commissioned.

"A proof of the wide outlook of the Grand Ad-

miral is seen in the fact that immediately after the occupation of the Flemish coast, even before the naval division was sent there, he sent a submarine expert as senior officer, to test the harbours and defences from the point of view of submarines. To this investigation is due the present effective exploitation of the Flemish coast.

"On the further course of the submarine building I have no detailed information, but it appears to me that at all events in 1916 a period of sterility occurred in the submarine productivity. One has the feeling that instead of building every possible submarine regardless of consequences we are trying to avoid having too many. Undoubtedly the uncertainty whether or not a submarine war was to be waged had an injurious effect on the submarine production, for it stands to reason that every nerve will not be strained in the production of a weapon that may never be brought into use. In view of the situation as a whole, when all raw material and all labour was in requisition for other important war purposes, it had to be carefully weighed whether it would be right to divert uncertain material and uncertain labour from other uses. A Government that would not have a submarine war simply because the number of submarines was too small, by giving a definite promise to take up the submarine war when a considerable increase had been made in the number of boats (say double) would have, without doubt, secured a quicker delivery of these boats and have gained for itself public confidence. This is the plainest proof that there were other reasons for the Government's attitude, and that the inadequate number of boats was only a pretext.

"As to the provision of further shipbuilding yards, the demands of Str. justified in essentials were in fact

granted. The arguments set forth by Herr von G. are wide of the mark. To keep the construction of U-boats a secret no longer served any purpose, after the English had put several more boats in hand.

"Motor-engines are also built in the shipyards (for example at Blom-a-Voss), their development is the affair of the navy. It is much more a question of multiplying the production of existing types than of improving on them. For, Your Excellency, may I be allowed to add that the building policy of the Admiralty from about the beginning of 1917 was much more severely criticized by the fleet than by Herr Str. That, however, has nothing to do with the Grand Admiral; on the contrary, one misses his great resourcefulness and abounding energy at every step. Owing to urgent pressure brought to bear by the fleet, all the last building contracts were increased to the amount that the Admiralty had originally laid down as possible.

"Taking these things into consideration, I should recommend that the Str. attacks only be dealt with in so far as they concern the person of the Grand Admiral and his building policy before and after the war. In proceeding to deal with the questions framed by Herr von G., I should like to set before Your Excellency the following facts based on my war experience, in relation to the question whether in the spring of 1915 we had sufficient submarines for a submarine campaign.

"In the year 1915 a U-boat reached four times, in 1916 three times, the successes of 1917, despite the restricted orders then in force. The reason for this was that defensive measures against submarines were not immediately available, and were only gradually developed. These measures, which consist in the arming of merchant steamers, could not have been adopted

more quickly than was the case side by side with the colossal task of supplying a big army in the field with artillery. England required for the submarine defence armament about, at a modest estimate, 12,000 light guns.

"We allowed this time when we held the upper hand to slip by without taking full advantage of it, and so were confronted in 1917 with an incomparably more difficult task than in 1915 or 1916. We can accomplish to-day with the number of our boats, and by dint of the utmost strain on the crews and heavy losses, the same monthly record as we were able to maintain in 1915, with one-quarter of the boats, and in 1916 with one-third, and this with comparatively little effort. The blame for having hindered the full exploitation of this weapon cannot be wriggled out of by all those who held forth against the submarine campaign, and just as little can they cleanse their hands of the blood which must still flow in order to win the necessary victory in face of the new defensive measures of the enemy.

"Here follows the really important point that the deficiency in transport which had set in already in 1915 continued to make itself felt during the following years, and both hindered and delayed such a reinforcement of the English army as was the case in 1916.

"The navy of 1915 to 1916 found itself in the same situation as a regiment or infantry which faces an enemy who has not yet fortified his position, and knows that this position must be taken before the enemy can be beaten. They report that the position is easy to take. They see the enemy every day digging himself in more deeply, making barbed-wire defences, posting artillery, and they announce this repeatedly to

those behind, begging for permission to attack. This is always refused. Only when the opponent has fortified his position strongly, and has perfected his plans for defence, does the permission to attack arrive, and then everybody is astonished that this position, which was said to be so easy to take, should cost long, weary struggles and much bloodshed. Perhaps to-day such military parallels are more easily understood than naval illustrations.

"We consider it a like piece of arrogance that parliamentarians, civilians, etc., should presume to pass judgment as to whether or no the forces are sufficient for a military or naval operation which the responsible leaders have decided on. Who ever heard of such a thing as, for example, before the present offensive on the Western front, a representative of the people passing judgment on the quality of the munitions? What would Ludendorff say to such interference? No one among the German people would understand it. But on the subject of the submarine war everyone may have a voice. How things would stand with us to-day if we had not combined to carry on the submarine war, even though it was belated, I need not describe; in my opinion we should, in spite of our strength on the Western front, be in a desperate position. We cannot too strongly contest the view that in 1915 and 1916 we had not sufficient submarines; it is merely a convenient evasion for all those people who now feel at the bottom of their hearts that their opposition to a submarine war was a fatal blunder. In conclusion, the verdict of those who work with the U-boats must be the criterion, not that of outsiders.

"The above remarks have been somewhat hastily written down owing to pressure of time. I must therefore respectfully beg that the style may not be

too harshly condemned. Should Your Excellency desire to make public in the press what I have written here, I am quite agreeable. We have held our tongues too long on these absurd perversions of history.

"I am,

"Your Excellency's humble servant,

(*Signed*) "BARTENBACH."

THE END

302 L7M A245
03/01/16 32000[illegible] SELF
The Group

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
3 3127 00263 7872
APR 3 2016
DATE DUE
WITHDRAWN